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DEC 1996
NO. 14

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This issue's **Magic Compendium** includes *Alliances* and *Mirage* card combinations, how to build and beat Turbo-Stasis decks, a "Deck Clinic" diagnosis for a mono-green deck, and much more. Check out the Compendium's table of contents on p. 21 for more details.



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Sculpting in Jell-O®

TRADING CARD GAMES are not exactly the easiest topics to cover in a bimonthly magazine. By their very nature, they're constantly changing. A basic part of the game last week might be completely insignificant a month later. Hot cards, popular deck types, important game strategies ebb and flow every week.

As a die-hard *Magic* player, I understand that this ever-changing flux is what makes the game so exciting. But as a journalist, well, the task seems daunting at times. So, how do we cover a game as metamorphic as *Magic*? We accomplish this by making use of three very important resources.

The first, naturally, is Wizards of the Coast (WotC). The very source of *Magic*, WotC provides us with access to every element of the game. The Research and Development crew, for example, lets us know what's on the horizon. The R&D crew fills us in on the new expansions and clues us in to what impact they might have on the game. Continuity paints in the backstory and reveals much of the flavor that lies hidden in the nooks and crannies.

The *Duelist* Convocation International (DCI) tells us about what's happening tournament-wise and warns us about what changes are coming down the pipeline.

Every department at WotC allows us access to learn what impact they are having on the game. In return, *The Duelist* provides them with a direct link to the public. If any section of WotC wants to share information with the players, they come to us.

The second resource: the players themselves. We spend lots of time keeping our collective finger on the pulse of the game. One way to accomplish this is to stay in contact with the top players. I, for example, make sure to stay on a first-name basis with the majority of the pro players. This access not only provides us with insight on what's happening on both the tournament scene and in casual play but also gets us some good authors.

The Duelist has always prided itself on its strategy columns. Who better to share their tournament-proven knowledge than the game's top players? The strategy

feature in this issue, for instance, is written by Brian Weissman, one of the true innovators of the game. "The Deck," Weissman's famous blue/white combination, has been a dominant force in Classic (Type I) tournaments for more than a year. In "Taking Card Advantage," (p. 60), he shares his expertise on this crucial element on tournament-level play.

The final resource is the reader. Many people take time to share their thoughts and feelings with us on a variety of issues. This connection allows us to glean what topics are important to the average *Magic* player.

Once we have all the information, we apply our expertise to predict what twists and turns *Magic* will take. The articles you read are sent through an extensive process where several sets of eyes (including members of R&D) look over the text to ensure that all information is accurate.

Once the content is complete, the article is passed to the art director, who turns black-and-white words into a colorful page layout. Pay careful attention to the illustrations. Oftentimes, when a card is featured in an article, we will ask the artist of the card to reinterpret his or her work with a new piece of art.

All in all, it's a bit tiring. Luckily, we don't have too much time to worry about it; there's always the next issue to get out.

Mark Rosewater

MARK ROSEWATER

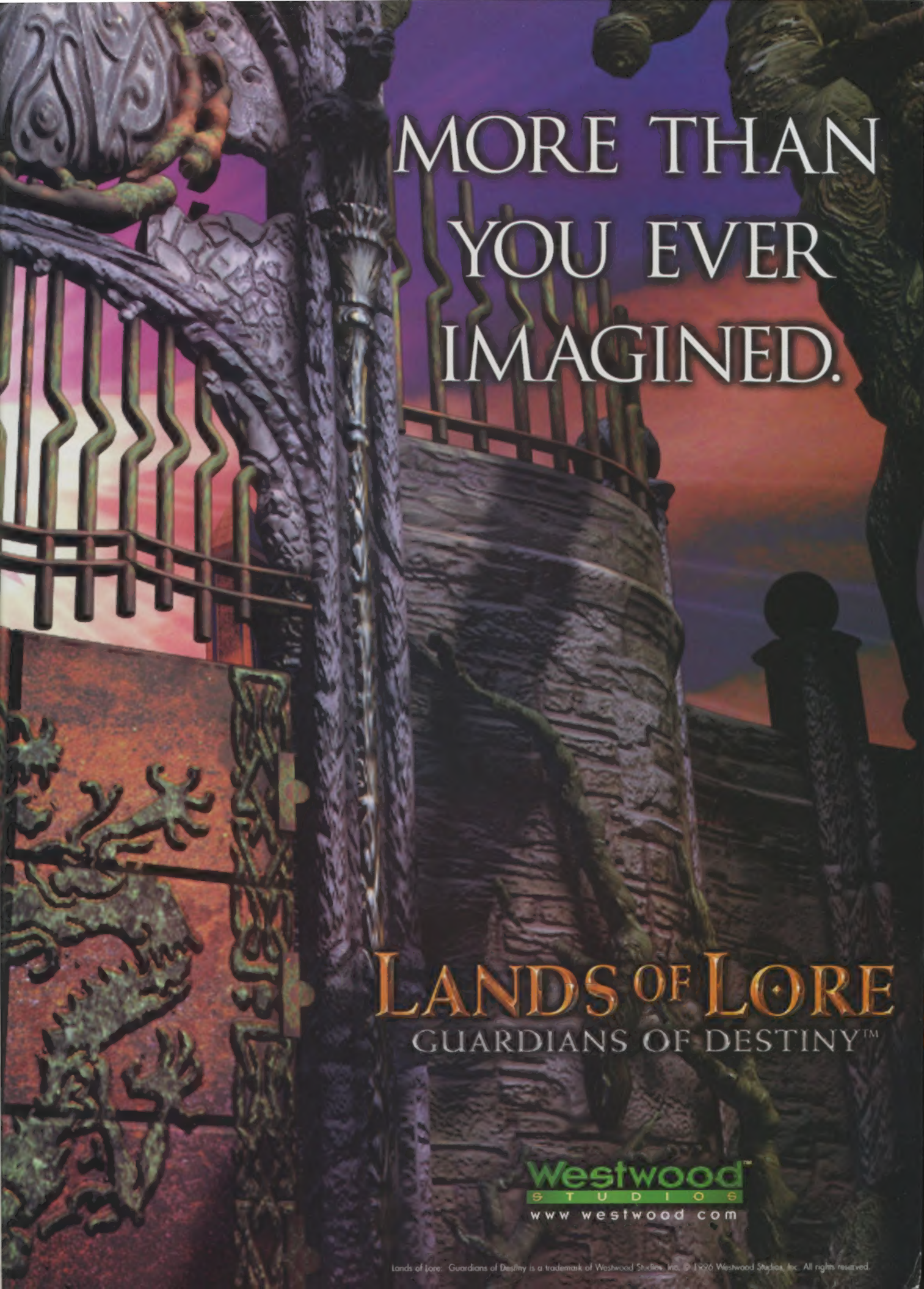
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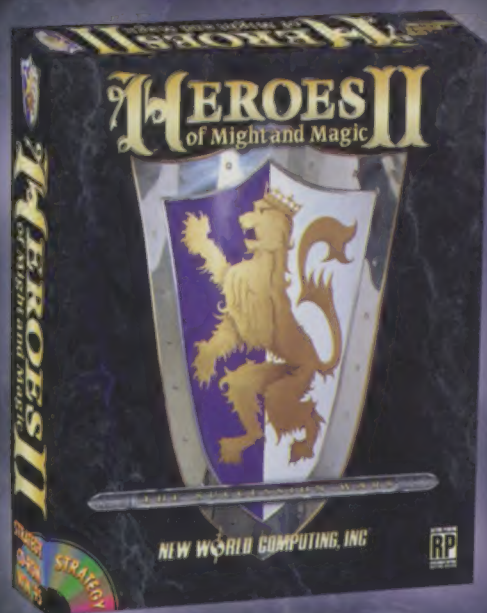
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of everything that made the original *Heroes* an all-time strategy classic. Scores of new hero and monster types, alliance formation for team play, enlarged combat maps,

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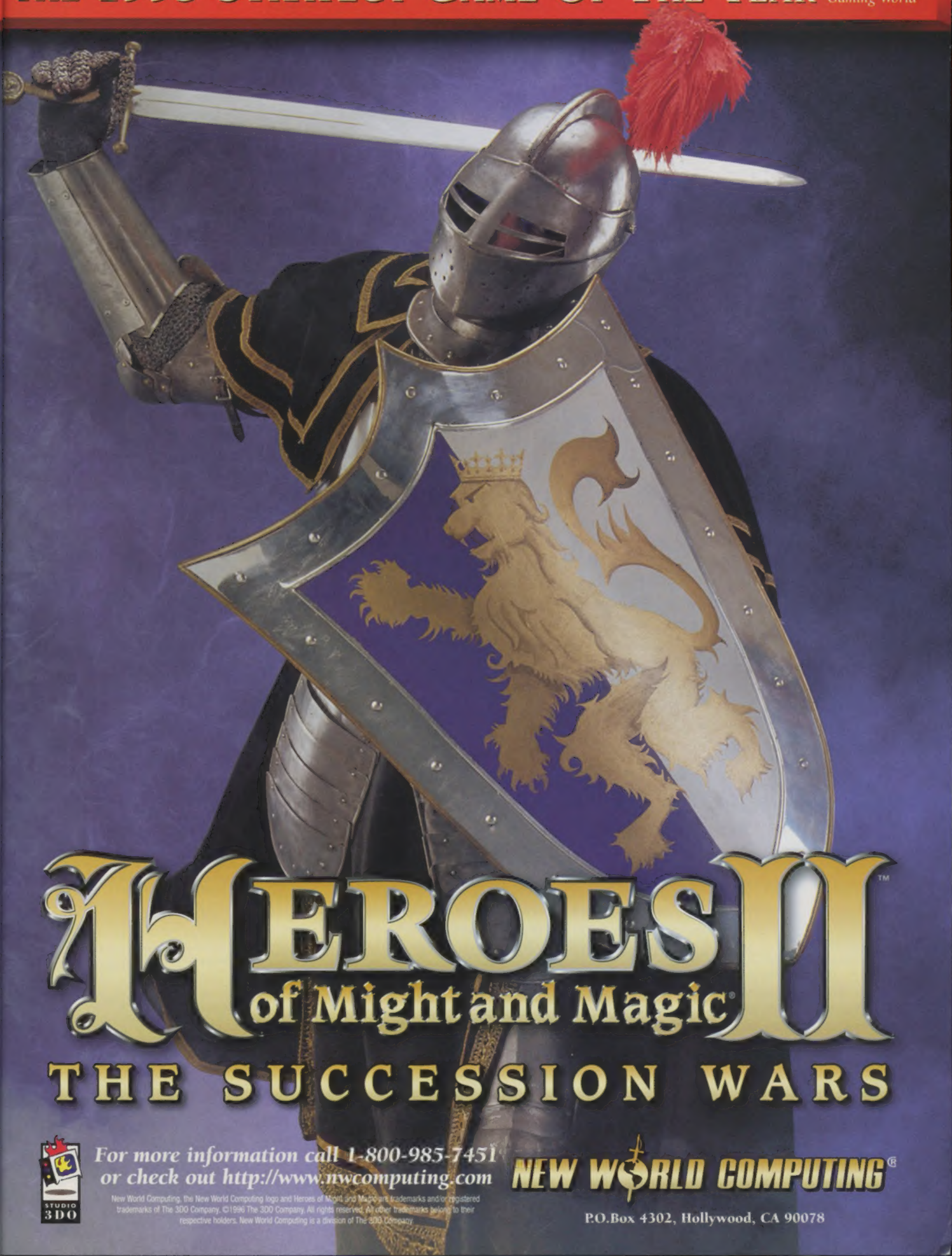
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ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

THE
DUELIST

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 6

Wise beyond His Years



D. Alexander Gregory. Just twenty-four years young, New York-based artist D. Alexander Gregory brings a wealth of worldly experience to his paintings. As the son of a former CIA communications director, this month's cover artist couldn't help but get his fair share of overseas travel early in life.

Born in Nicofia, Cypress, he and his parents lived there until Gregory was five, when they moved to Europe. "With my father's embassy work, we bounded around Europe for about three years," he says. "We lived in Copenhagen, Denmark, London, Budapest, and Romania. Unfortunately, I was too young to enjoy it all, but it did result in my seeing all these different places." Gregory and his family landed stateside when the future artist was eight.

This month's cover illustration is a reinterpretation of "Final Fortune," a card he painted for *Mirage*, Wizards of the Coast's ninth expansion set for *Magic: The Gathering*.

"Originally it was called 'High Stakes,'" explains Gregory. "Basically it features two people attacking each other. It shows one of the opponents making his last attempt to win the battle. The cover art shows that he survived the attack. It's moments after the battle, and he's the survivor. The coolest thing for me was to base the art around reality and tribal imagery. It was fun to explore that."

Gregory's relationship with Wizards started two years ago, when he illustrated ten *Jyhad* cards. He's also painted paperback book covers, as well as comic book covers for industry heavyweights Marvel Comics and DC Comics.

Though Gregory now resides in NYC with his wife Maho (also an artist), it was while attending high school in Lexington, South Carolina, that his talent was first recognized. "I was just taking some art classes and someone told me I could make a living doing this stuff. He told me all these things about comic book artists I never knew."

Gregory attended Savannah College of Art & Design (in Georgia) but dropped out after two years. His rationale was simple: "I never got any formal training [in art], so I'm pretty much self-taught. Besides, school was pretty oblivious to what you really need in order to survive as a human being who paints."

211 in Progress



Tom Wylie. Tom Wylie's no "Banana Slug," even if he did graduate in 1992 from the school with the infamous mascot: U.C. Santa Cruz. A two-year veteran of Wizards of the Coast's Research and Development group, Wylie wears several hats at WotC.

Besides playtesting *Magic*, Wylie tracks the rules for all of WotC's *Deckmaster* games and serves as a lead developer for *Netrunner*, which includes working on the cards and coming up with flavor text for the company's new "Corporation versus Runner" game. "Basically I'm the person who winds up doing most of the work," he says jokingly.

But the role in which Wylie is making a name for himself involves WotC's *Magic Pro Tour*. As head judge for each of the professional tournaments, Wylie lays down the law. In fact, at the very first stop this year, in New York City last February, one of Wylie's rulings was questioned by a Senior competitor. "I don't think you understand the rules," said the bewildered player. Wylie's response: "No, you don't understand. I *am* the rules."

On top of everything else Wylie still finds time to write a pair of widely read columns in *The Duelist*, "Murk Dwellers" and "Magic Rulings & Errata." When he's not putting in his fifty-plus hours a week at WotC, the 25-year-old former software engineer likes to shoot pool. His favorite hangout nowadays is the 211 Club, a 21-table billiard hall in Seattle's Belltown District.



Gregory's "Final Fortune" inspired this month's cover art.

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This Issue Brought to You By: Nonstop vacations; The Official 1996 *Magic: The Gathering* World Championships, in all its glory; Pine Rush; Simon's Rock College of Bard; "Are those coniferous or deciduous?"; no housework; silly decisions like deciding to write wedding invitations in calligraphy; **BattleTech** heck; twenty-seven years of evolution; crud and stuff; sisters, who remind you what is Important; elephants and *Falsettoland*; Emma, Matilda, Frank and Ollie; Bumpershoot '96; Marie Antoinette; and even more vacations.

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Who's the Fairest?

I keep reading about people who complain about Type I decks, and I think it's time someone defended Type I play. Moxes, Black Lotus, Ancestral Recall, Time Walk, and Timetwister don't make you an instant winner, and they aren't required to win.

Every tournament I have been to has been a Type I tournament, and I've won two of them. I won without Moxes or a Lotus, and it wasn't because of luck that I won; it was skill.

You don't just need the cards; you have to know how to use them well. I've played against people who had all of the good cards, but they as players weren't any good at all. Lots of people who buy all those expensive cards have no deck-building skills and are very easy to beat because they think that the power cards are all they need to win.

I do believe that many of the Type I cards are too powerful, but I do not like the Type II attitude of "That card is old, so you can't use it." I don't like hearing people say that Type I players don't have any skill, and I don't think a respected gaming magazine like *The Duelist* should print such ignorant letters. Cards are expensive, and I'm not going to quit using mine because they might be older than someone else's. I do think Type 1.5 tournaments are a good idea because they allow people a wider variety of cards to choose from. And they're more fair than Type I and Type II because restricted cards are banned.

Rocco J. Carello
Rcarello@nmu.edu

Stereo-Type I-ing

I am quite disgusted at the way your magazine portrays and stereotypes Type I while making Type II look like God's gift to gamers.

Lawrence Mak claimed in his letter titled "What Money Can Buy" (*Duelist* #11), that if you had the power cards, it didn't matter what other cards you had in your deck. I would love to play him for ante or in a tournament. None of the power cards can win by themselves. None of them do any damage whatsoever; they only help you get your "good" cards in play.

You can't put the power cards in a deck without thinking some about a strategy. I

recently went to a tournament where two players were playing all the power cards in their decks and didn't get past the first round—and they played against beginners. I took a look at their decks and found no strategy at all; they just threw all the restricted and powerful cards together with a few creatures.

Another misconception is that you *have* to have the power cards in order to compete in Type I. That's totally false. I go to Type I tournaments in New Jersey and see some amazing competition. I saw a kid with no power cards at all make it to the Final 4.

Another time I saw a kid with a Goblin deck make it to the

finals! His only power card was a Mox; the rest of his cards were commons.

That brings me to another point. Most power cards are overrated. Ask Type I players about Moxes, Black Lotus, Timetwister, or Time Walk, and they'll all say the same thing: overrated cards. Most Type I players play with three or four Moxes and a Lotus, depending on their deck color. You don't *want* four Moxes in your opening hand or very early. If you get that many, then you'll have a lot of mana on the table, but you'll have virtually no hand. The Lotus is only powerful in the first three or four turns and then becomes a wasted draw. And you'd be surprised at what a lot of Type I players think of Time Walk. Most look at it as a cantrip. Sure, you get to draw an extra card, but you cast one in order to get one. A lot of people don't play it. And Timetwister is a joke. Almost no one in Type I plays it because you don't want your opponent drawing cards, especially at your expense.

Type I tournaments have been accused of using the same types of decks, but not all of them are the same by any means. Sure, there are some counterspell decks, but each has its own twist. My friends and I usually don't play counterspells, and we've won tournaments. How can Type II players criticize Type I for using all the same decks when everybody in Type II plays Necrodecks or Erhnaggedon? Go to newsgroups and you'll see endless complaining about how Necro dominates! You'll see complaining about everything in Type II. People want

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

For those who have been eagerly waiting to hear the results of various *Duelist* contests, the wait is over. Congratulations to all of the following winners, and thank you to everyone who entered!

"Know the Pros" contest winners (*Duelist* #11):
Grand-prize winner: Lowell Miyagi, Covington, IN
First-prize winner: Theo Elkow, St. Louis, MO

MicroProse Screen Saver winners (*Duelist* #11):
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 Michael Black, New York, NY
 Ken Brand, West Orange, NJ
 Mike Dennis, Irving, TX
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 Carl Heath, Watauga, TX

Magic: The Puzzling book winners (*Duelist* #10):
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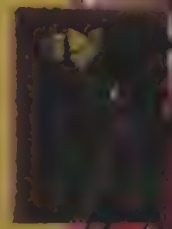
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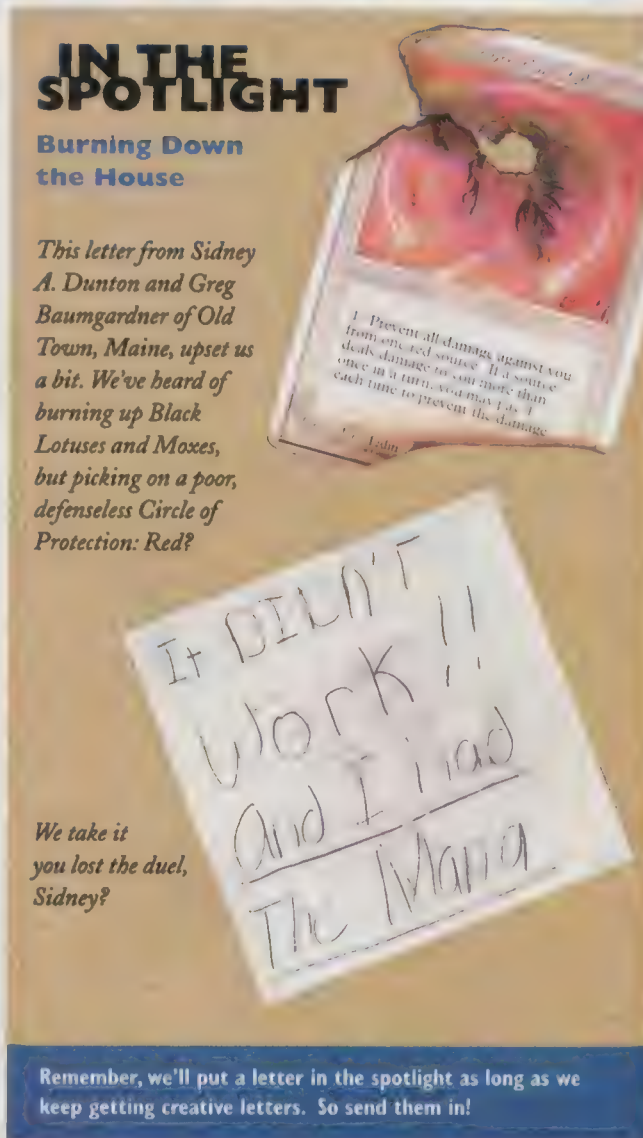
Hymn and Necropotence restricted and want Zuran Orb banned, but you never hear, "Ban Moxes or Twister." Type I is where the more balanced game is at because no one deck dominates like in Type II.

Even though I have all the power cards, I'm all for Wizards of the Coast's reprinting them. For a little while, people will be stuffing their decks with power cards, but after some time, they'll realize they're not what they're cut out to be. My suggestion to Wizards of the Coast is to re-evaluate Type I. Take a closer look; ask experienced players; go to tournaments. Then you'll see what's really going on and stop the stereotyping.

Ankur Kumar
Flemington, NJ

Expanding Horizons

Alliances was disappointing to me in only one respect: as in prior expansions, little racial or ethnic diversity in the characters was represented in the artwork. With well over one thousand different cards in print, only a handful of black or Asian characters are featured on Magic cards. Of the many artists represented on the cards, only Phil and Kaja Foglio consistently include non-whites in their artwork. While I appreciate cards like Spirit Link, Hydroblast, Kismet, and



We take it you lost the duel, Sidney?

Remember, we'll put a letter in the spotlight as long as we keep getting creative letters. So send them in!

Cuombajj Witches, it would be nice to see a wider variety of artists representing diverse characters in their illustrations. Margaret Organ-Kean's Cloak of Confusion and Susan Van Camp's Gift of the Woods are examples of the

type of artwork that should be emulated.

Magic has an admirable tradition of representing women in positive roles in its artwork. Many of the most popular artists are women. I hope a similar tradition of diversity in artists and artwork can be established with respect to blacks and Asians.

Thomas Griffith
Los Angeles, CA

Thanks for writing, Thomas. Hopefully, you've had an opportunity to check out the art in Mirage, since it seems to do just what you're asking for.

Smart Shopping

I am writing to you concerning Mark Wright's letter in *Duelist* #11 titled "Queen's Gambit." I'm no one to discredit an individual's opinion, but I'm glad that Wizards of the Coast reprinted cards for *Chronicles* and *Fourth Edition*. You see, I started playing Magic after *Chronicles* came out, and I find it much better to buy individual cards for five dollars or less, rather than buying cards for thirty dollars or more.

Noel Wilkinson
Baton Rouge, LA

CyberMagic Update

In *Duelist* #12, you featured an article called "CyberMagic." All in all, the article was very good; as a matter of fact, it was one of the more accurate ones I've read. But it seems that you have left out an important part of the "heritage," if you will, of Magic on the Net. While you did speak with Joseph Elkouby about The Vault, you failed to mention, or even contact, Web Across Dominia for their input. Web Across Dominia was the original Magic Net-zine, which you should have found out through your research. It started a flood of take-offs that have all done well and gone in different directions than WAD has. I would only assume that an article talking about Magic on the Internet would also discuss the oldest of the online Magic periodicals. It is very hard to believe that we were not contacted for input, nor even mentioned in your article.

Ryan J. Norris
Editor and Publisher
Web Across Dominia
Magazine

Comments? Questions?

WE'RE LONELY HERE!

Send your thoughts to "Letters," c/o *The Duelist*, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707, or to <duelist@wizards.com>.

Please include your name, address, and phone number for verification purposes. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN SNOODY

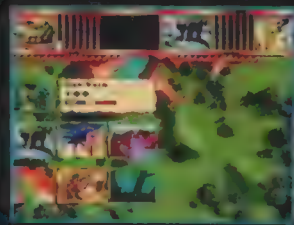
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SIERRA

Traveling the World

The collectable **Magic: The Gathering Multiverse Gift Box** is almost here; in fact, you should be seeing it in stores, retailing at \$19.95, in early November. The gift box includes a total of six **Magic** boosters, including two preview boosters for *Visions*, one Italian *Alliances*, one French *Homelands*, one Japanese *Chronicles*, and one German *Renaissance*. The display box also converts into a carrying case. (For more information on the gift box and the *Visions* preview cards, see "A Visionary Gift" on page 34.)



Dreaming Visions

Now that you've gotten a taste of *Mirage*, it's almost time for *Visions*, which will continue with the same themes of its mother expansion. If you've seen the *Multiverse Gift Box*, then you've probably already played with some of the twenty-five preview cards for *Visions*, but the entire set of over 160 cards is scheduled to hit the streets in January 1997. *Visions* will be available in fifteen-card boosters that will retail for \$2.95.

The Future of BattleTech

With **BattleTech's** TCG release in November of this year, many players will be looking for even more cards to fill out their stockpiles. As yet unnamed, the first expansion is tentatively scheduled to be released in late spring/early summer with a second expansion scheduled for release in late summer/early fall.



MicroProse Magic: Worth the Wait

So when will the MicroProse computer game for **Magic: The Gathering** be released? Says David Etheredge of MicroProse, "the number one priority [of Wizards of the Coast and MicroProse] is quality and consistency with the card game."

Descriptions of the game make it sound well worth the wait. The game will be comprised of over 400 cards, mostly from *Fourth Edition*, but will also include twenty-three cards that are out of print—cards like *Black Lotus*. MicroProse **Magic** players will also get twelve new cards, called the Astral set, that will have random

components. The main feature of the game, called "the duel," will let you construct a deck and play against an opponent, more than one opponent, or the computer. And if you have a rules question, why the computer will have the answer. The game also has an ani-

mated multimedia tutorial and a contact-sensitive animated help file. You get all this plus future expansions every three or four months, the first of which will include *Arabian Nights*, *Antiquities*, and *Unlimited*.

The Seasons of Arena

Have you joined **Arena**, the League for **Magic: The Gathering** yet? **Arena** sponsors tournaments at local retail stores for players of all skills and experiences. Participants in **Arena** compete for prizes and recognition and also receive a rare, alternative-

art card when they sign up. **Arena's** first season ended on September 8, with over 200 stores and more than 3000 players participating.

You can find **Arena** in several new cities during this, their Harvest Season. **Arena** is currently running in stores in Albuquerque, NM; Atlanta, GA; Boston, MA; Chicago, IL; Cincinnati, OH; Cleveland-Akron, OH; Columbus, OH; Dallas, TX; Denver-Boulder, CO; Detroit-Ann Arbor-Flint, MI; Houston-Galveston, TX; Kansas City, MO; Los Angeles, CA; Miami-Fort Lauderdale, FL;

The Duelist Wants You

All you need is a passion for Magic, a great sense of humor, and the ability to spell Ethernal Osvud!

The Duelist is looking for a full-time editor to work in-house at Wizards of the Coast. The job requires extensive knowledge of **Magic**. Editing experience is not mandatory, but an applicant must be able to demonstrate strong copyediting, content editing, and writing skills. A degree in journalism, communications, or English is a plus, as is previous publishing experience.

The Duelist is also looking for freelance writers capable of writing intelligently about **Magic**. Ability to write to size and meet deadlines is essential.

Send your resumés and editing or writing samples to: **The Duelist**, c/o WotC Human Resources, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057, or fax them to (206) 204-5811.



(continued)

Milwaukee, WI; Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN; New York City, NY; Norfolk, VA; Philadelphia, PA; Phoenix-Mesa, AZ; Pittsburgh, PA; Portland, OR; Sacramento, CA; San Antonio, TX; San Diego, CA; San Francisco, CA; Seattle, WA; St. Louis, MO; Tampa-St. Petersburg, FL; Washington, D.C.

Players interested in more information about Arena should check out the league's website at <<http://www.wizards.com/Arena>>, or call Wizards of the Coast Customer Service at (206) 624-0933. Retailers should contact their Merchant Relations representative.

VAMPIRE
THE STRANGE SITUATIONS

The Latest with Vampires

NEW DCI RULES FOR V:TES

The DCI and Wizards of the Coast's Research and Development team are currently reviewing and revising the pre-existing DCI tournament rules. The goal is to produce more user-friendly tournament rules while promoting the optimal environment in which V:TES should be played. The new tournament rules will also hopefully promote an increase in DCI-sanctioned V:TES tournament play. Some of the changes are quite severe, including removing the entire restricted list and adding two special table rules for game play. Expect to see the tournament rules circulate some time in October.

WOTC AND THE ICC

Selected representatives from Wizards of the Coast will be attending the International Camarilla Conclave (ICC) on Halloween weekend (October 31st–November 3rd) in Houston, Texas. Their presence at the ICC will be to promote the release of *The Sabbat* (see *Sabbat* coverage on page 69), as well as to host various DCI-sanctioned V:TES tournaments, like the tentatively scheduled first *Sabbat* sealed-booster event. Make plans now to meet with WotC personalities and take part in the excitement of tournament V:TES! For more information on the ICC, write to: ICC, P.O. Box 15050, College Station, TX 77841-5050.

—Shawn F. Carnes



The Word From HQ

Ladies and Gentlemen, Start Your Cybermodems...

If you haven't checked out the Netrunner section of the Wizards of the Coast website lately, then get movin', Wilson; you're behind! The latest and greatest features include an online demo of *Netrunner* as well as the second installment of *Webrunner*, entitled *The Forbidden Code*. The online demo allows a single person to walk through the basic steps necessary to start playing both the Corp and Runner. You actually get to see the step-by-step progression of a basic game of *Netrunner*. So if you or any of your friends have been hesitant to sink any cash into *Netrunner* without playing it first, this is a deal for you. *Webrunner II: The Forbidden Code*, the interactive online *Netrunner* contest, ended on September 27th. However, like *Webrunner: The Hidden Agenda*, the contest has been converted to a game and is available to play on the Wizards website. In this incarnation of *Webrunner*, you are the Deputy Security Chief at Encoder, Inc., a cryptography company in the midst of a hostile takeover by evil corporate monolith Futokora Unlimited. Get involved in protecting your employer from a hostile take over and check out the free, interactive *Netrunner* demo at the Wizards of the Coast website: <<http://www.wizards.com>>.



Some guys played *Netrunner* at the Magic World Championships!

Magic gets all of the attention! You might not have known about it, but there was more than just *Magic* events going on at the *Magic World Championships*; three *Netrunner* tournaments were held during the August 15–18 event. The first tournament was sealed deck with a *Proteus* booster pack. This was, of course, before *Proteus* was released to the public, so the participants earned bragging rights in the *Netrunner* community. The other two tournaments were constructed deck. All of these events were a blast, and we appreciate everyone who participated.

Netrunner with a Hint of Hazelnut



Watch for more of Norm Dwyer's art in the upcoming *Netrunner* expansion.

Proteus has only been out for a few months, but the *Netrunner* team is hard at work on the follow-up expansion. Hazelnut, the expansion's code name, picks up soon after the *Proteus* technology has been discovered and manipulated. Corporate Artificial Intelligences are gaining sentience and sporing themselves throughout the net. Possessing superior ice breaking capabilities, the AIs are assaulting corporate data forts in search of any and all data. Manipulating the hysteria of a paranoid public, many vulnerable corporations have succeeded in having legislation enacted that has relaxed ice restrictions. Now, any entity, AI or Runner, that is purposefully invading corporate data forts will have a few surprises in store for them. Of course, being as resourceful as they are intelligent, many of the AIs have enlisted their own soldiers to help wage the information war—the best Runners to ever crash a data fort. Look for the second *Netrunner* expansion in early 1997

—Kevin Maples, *Netrunner Mole*

Insider Trading

by Mark Rosewater



All Work and No Play...

A lot of people seem to think the folks in Magic R&D are just a bunch of lucky people who get paid to play games. Okay, I guess that part is true. But we do stop playing occasionally to take breaks, and that's when most of us play network computer games.

One such break led to a Magic card coming out in *Visions* (the *Mirage* expansion to be released in January, 1997). In *Warcraft II*, magic users can cast a spell called Polymorph, which turns the opponent's creatures into sheep. Greatly humored by the ability to turn a mighty dragon into a braying ball of wool, we decided it was crucial for Magic to have this sheep-

shaping ability. Thus was born the Ovinomancer, a blue wizard that can turn any creature into a 0/1 sheep token.

Drumroll, Please...

I promised last issue to let the cat out of the bag and officially announce the sixteen invitees for the first annual Duelist Invitational. Before I do, I would like to introduce the panel that selected the group and quickly explain the selection criteria.

The eight-person panel included David Doust (tournament coordinator), Andrew Finch (Pro Tour Manager), Scott Larabee (tournament coordinator), Terry Melia (*Duelist Sideboard* Editor and *Duelist* Managing Editor), Didier Monin (Customer Service, Wizards of the Coast France), Beth Moursund (Pro Tour judge/*Duelist* writer), Tom Wylie (Pro Tour head judge/*Duelist* contributing

You Don't Say

...and I'm sorry you know Magic R&D is working on flavor text. I don't write comedy for the living for those who never bothered reading any of my bios.) Here are a few pieces of their

PACIFISM

...and I'm sorry you know Magic R&D is working on flavor text. I don't write comedy for the living for those who never bothered reading any of my bios.) Here are a few pieces of their

editor), and me (Pro Tour judge/*Duelist* contributing editor).

First and foremost we wanted players who have proven through competition that they are among the best in the game. Second, we wanted players who have made a name for themselves, people who other players read about and aspire to someday play and defeat. Third, we wanted personalities, people who bring spice and excitement to Magic



POLYMORPH

...and I'm sorry you know Magic R&D is working on flavor text. I don't write comedy for the living for those who never bothered reading any of my bios.) Here are a few pieces of their

(This may be the world's first attempt at Atog poetry.)

"To Be a Foratog"
If bark is dark
Then wood is good;
If light, don't bite
Just have the same



competition. And finally, we wanted diversity. Magic is

played the world over. We felt the Duelist Invitational needed to reflect that.

The selection process was quite difficult as there were more than sixteen worthy recipients of invitations, and the panel was forced to make a number of hard choices. But enough of my yapping. Here are the sixteen invitees of the first annual Duelist Invitational:

- Thomas Andersson (Sweden)
- George Baxter (U.S.A.)
- Alexander Blumke (Switzerland)
- Mark Chalice (U.S.A.)
- Tom Chanpheng (Australia)
- Amiel Feldman (Switzerland)
- Scott Johns (U.S.A.)
- Mark Justice (U.S.A.)
- Bertrand Lestrée (France)
- Leon Lindback (Sweden)
- Matt Place (U.S.A.)
- Olle Rade (Sweden)
- Andrea Redi (Italy)
- Shawn "Hammer" Regnier (U.S.A.)
- Eric Tam (Canada)
- Brian Weissman (U.S.A.)

A Piece of History

While rummaging through my closet, I stumbled across a little gem. Back in August of 1994, I had the honor of transcribing the first World Championships between Zak Dolan and Bertrand Lestrée. Part of that job entailed writing down the contents of both decks. As neither deck has ever been publicly listed, I thought it might be cool to let you see what deck won the first World Championships. I promise to reveal Lestrée's deck in a later column.

Zak Dolan's Championship Deck

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Library of Alexandria | 4 Swords to Plowshares |
| 4 Savannah | 1 Wrath of God |
| 2 Strip Mine | 1 Black Lotus |
| 4 Tropical Island | 1 Black Vise |
| 4 Tundra | 1 Howling Mine |
| 1 Ancestral Recall | 1 Icy Manipulator |
| 1 Clone | 1 Ivory Tower |
| 1 Control Magic | 1 Mana Vault |
| 1 Mana Drain | 2 Meekstone |
| 2 Old Man of the Sea | 1 Mox Emerald |
| 1 Recall | 1 Mox Jet |
| 1 Siren's Call | 1 Mox Pearl |
| 2 Stasis | 1 Mox Ruby |
| 1 Time Elemental | 1 Mox Sapphire |
| 1 Timetwister | 1 Sol Ring |
| 1 Time Walk | 1 Winter Orb |
| 1 Vesuvan Doppelganger | |
| 1 Birds of Paradise | |
| 1 Ley Druid | |
| 1 Regrowth | |
| 1 Armageddon | |
| 2 Disenchant | |
| 1 Kismet | |
| 4 Serra Angel | |



SIDEBOARD

- 1 Chaos Orb
- 1 CoP: Red
- 1 Copy Artifact
- 1 Diamond Valley
- 1 In the Eye of Chaos
- 1 Floral Spuzzem
- 2 Karma
- 1 Magical Hack
- 1 Power Sink
- 1 Presence of the Master
- 1 Reverse Damage
- 1 Sleight of Mind
- 1 Kismet
- 1 Winter Blast



Mark Rosewater continues to risk his job to reveal the future of Magic.

WHAT'S NEW?

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by Phil Foglio

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2. TOSS CARDS INTO THE AIR.



3. COLLECT AS MANY CARDS AS YOU CAN IN 10 SECONDS. GO FOR THE RARES.



MANA TWISTER--

LAY OUT YOUR ENTIRE DECK FACE UP. YOU CAN ONLY USE THE CARDS YOU ARE ACTUALLY TOUCHING.

TAP... RED... ACTIVATE... DWARVEN... PANCAKE... MACHINE? (WHEW!)

...BUT...

BLOCK... WITH... LIRZA'S... FUNNY... HAT!

IT'S ALL I CAN REACH!!



THAT OLD PUCK MAGIC--

REMOVE LAND CARDS. GLUE REMAINING CARDS ONTO HOCKEY PUCKS. GET TWENTY POINTS OF DAMAGE DEALERS PAST YOUR OPPONENT.

NOW JUST A DARN MINUTE!

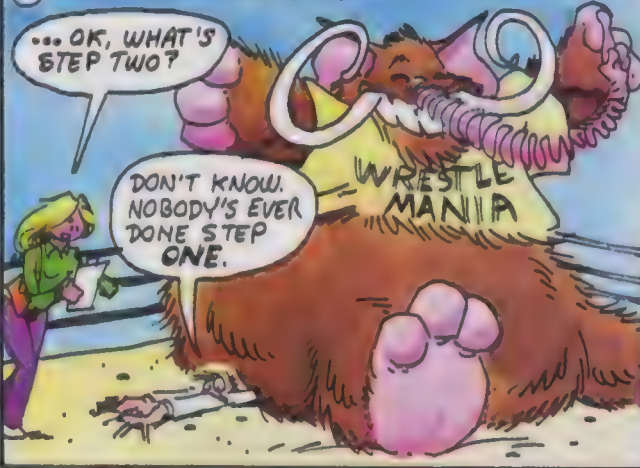


MAMMOTH WRESTLING--

1. PIN YOUR MAMMOTH.

...OK, WHAT'S STEP TWO?

DON'T KNOW. NOBODY'S EVER DONE STEP ONE.

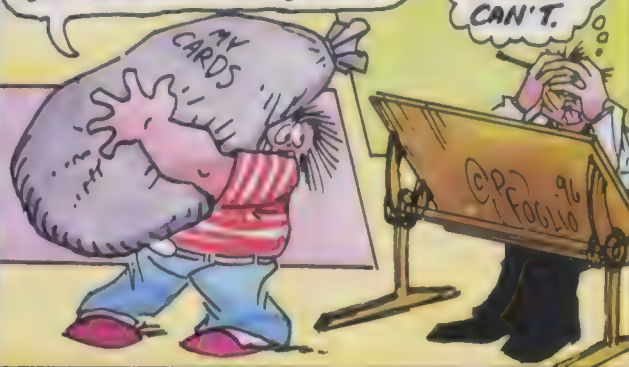


500 LB. JERK--

SIMPLY CARRY EVERY SINGLE CARD YOU OWN EVERYWHERE YOU GO.

OKAY- I GOT THE FIRST PART- BUT WHERE'S THE 'JERK'?

I CAN'T. I JUST CAN'T.



REBELS OUTNUMBERED. VADER APPROACHING. HIT THE DECK.



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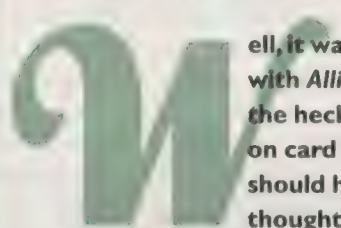
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MAGIC COMPENDIUM

WotC Picks



Well, it was a good year for Magic; you got lots of new cool cards with *Alliances* and *Mirage*, and now you're trying to figure out how the heck to play them all. This issue's "WotC Picks" concentrates on card combos for these two most recent Magic expansions and should help you play some of those cards you maybe hadn't thought about before.

Maro and Storm Cauldron

Maro from *Mirage* is a great creature as long as you have a nice supply of cards in your hand, since its power and toughness are each equal to the number you have in your hand. There are cards, though, that help you keep cards in your hand. Storm Cauldron from *Alliances* makes land go back to your hand at instant speed each time the land is tapped—a handy effect when you have a few Maros in play.

Carrion, Righteousness, and Nocturnal Raid

Carrion is a black instant from *Mirage* that lets you sacrifice a creature and put into play a number of 0/1 black Maggot tokens equal to that creature's power. So block with a creature and then cast Righteousness on it, giving it a +7/+7, or play Howl from Beyond for a similar effect. After combat, sacrifice it for Carrion and create lots and

lots of 0/1 Maggot tokens.

If you're playing with Bad Moon, your



Maggots are automatically 1/2 token creatures.

Next turn, you can attack with them and make them even more detestable by casting Nocturnal Raid from *Mirage*, which gives black creatures +2/+0 until end of turn.

Bazaar of Wonders, Helm of Obedience, and Teferi's Imp

This is the ultimate way to limit your opponent's cards. Bazaar of Wonders from *Mirage* is an enchant world that removes all cards in all graveyards from the game. In addition, whenever a spell is played, it's countered if a card with the same name is in play or in any graveyard. Now combine that with a Helm of Obedience or Millstone, putting cards from your opponent's library into her

graveyard every turn, and your opponent's card choices are going to be extremely limited, especially if you happen to mill a Disenchant or Tranquility. In the meantime, Teferi's Imp, also from *Mirage*, is a phasing 1/1 flyer that forces you to choose and discard a card when it phases out and to draw a card when it phases in. The Imp will let you get rid of the cards you can't play (due to the Bazaar) and draw new cards. Thus your hand will be fresh and ready to go while your opponent will be stuck with a lot of useless cards. And if you want to be able to play cards that are already in your graveyard, you may think about using Headstone, which



removes a target card from any graveyard from the game, or activating Tormod's Crypt and removing your own graveyard from the game.

Gargantuan Gorilla, Lodestone Bauble, and Binding Agony
Alliance's Gargantuan Gorilla is pretty fearsome to start with, since it's a 7/7 creature and it carries its own personal Arena with it on its back (tap to square off against target creature and exchange damage equal to each creature's power). The Gorilla has

a drawback, however; it requires you to sacrifice a forest during your upkeep or take 7 damage, but that's why you include *Alliance's*



Lodestone Bauble—to get the land you sacrifice on top of your library. Now enchant one of your opponent's creatures with Binding Agony from *Mirage*, which deals 1 damage to that creature's controller for each 1 damage dealt to the enchanted creature. Tap your Gorilla to deal 7 damage to the creature enchanted with Binding Agony and deal 7 damage to your opponent. For added fun, use Howl from Beyond and deal as much extra damage as you have mana to pump into it. Or put Regeneration on the creature your Gorilla is pounding on, allowing it to deal 7 damage to your opponent turn after turn.

attacking creature flying with Harmattan Efreet, and then use the Sling to tap a high-powered, cheap creature such as Elvish Ranger and have it deal damage equal to its power to the attacking flyer.

Hakim, Loreweaver and Crown of the Ages

Already used all your good creature enchantments like Torture, Immolation, Paralyze, and Weakness? Crown of the Ages lets you switch a target enchantment from one creature to another, but if the enchantments are already in your graveyard, the Crown won't help. Hakim, Loreweaver from *Mirage*, however, lets you take a target creature enchantment from your graveyard and put it on the Loreweaver. From there, you can transfer it to where you want with the Crown.

Stalking Tiger and Goblin War Drums

Mirage's Stalking Tiger is a 3/3 green creature that cannot be blocked by more than one creature. If you have Goblin War Drums in play, your attacking creatures can't be blocked by fewer than two creatures. So your opponent will have no choice but to let your Tiger through. Enchant it with Firebreathing or Giant Strength and it becomes even more lethal.

Phyrexian Vault and Ray of Command

More cards in hand is almost always a good thing, and Phyrexian Vault from *Mirage* lets you tap $\{2\}$ and the Vault to sacrifice a creature and draw a card. That's a pretty hefty price to pay, but when you use Ray of Command to take control of one of your opponent's creatures for a turn, the sacrifice becomes much easier.

Harmattan Efreet, Elvish Ranger, and Unerring Sling

Need to kill a creature but don't want to block it and risk one of yours? Harmattan Efreet from *Mirage* is a blue 2/2 flyer that can give another creature flying until end of turn when you tap $\{2\}$ and Unerring Sling, an artifact from *Mirage*, you can tap a creature and have it deal damage equal to its power to a target attacking or blocking flying creature. So give your opponent's



"WotC Picks & Tricks" was compiled by Melody Alder, with contributions from Adam Conus, Mischa Donders, Mike Elliott, Garon Galloway, Scott McGough, Marc "Sparky" Schmalz, and Chris Wilkes.

WotC Tricks

**Time is a Test of Trouble—
 But not a Remedy—
 If such it proved, it proves too
 There was no Melody.**

Who says time can't be a remedy? Well, at least in *Magic* it can be. Here are a couple more timing tricks that may help you fix some dueling problems.

BREEDING ZONE

Goblin Warrens from *Fallen Empires* is a handy enchantment to have around in a Goblin deck since you can tap $\{2\}$ and sacrifice two Goblins to put three 1/1 Goblin tokens into play. What most people don't realize is that you can do this during your opponent's attack (or during your attack) and create surprise blockers. If you only have two Goblins to block against a horde of creatures, for instance, sacrifice them and create three more; then sacrifice two Goblin tokens and create three more, and then sacrifice.... You get the picture. You can keep breeding as long as you have the mana.

GOOD TO THE LAST DROP

There's a smart way to sacrifice, and there's a not-so-smart way. Just remember that when you have to sacrifice a card—whether it be a land to Zuran Orb or a creature to Fallen Angel—use the card you're sacrificing beforehand. If it's a creature, attack with it, and if it's a land, tap it for mana. Squeeze out every last bit of usefulness you can get.

House Rules

Team-Competition Events

As Magic continues to grow as a sport, so do the various forms of competition. As player teams keep springing up, there's an increasing interest in team-style competition. Here are some formats that have proven to be successful for Wizards of the Coast. There are many team-competition structures that have multiple players in the same game, like "Emperor Magic" (see *Duelist* #2, p.12) or "Doubles Magic." This article, however, covers only team competitions sporting one-on-one duels.

Format

Like any individual competition, any Magic tournament format (Constructed or Limited) can be used. But unlike most individual competitions, because you have several players per team, you can use several formats per event. For example, in a three-player team event you can have one player using a Classic (Type I) deck, another using a Standard (Type II) deck, and a third using a Classic Restricted (Type 1.5) deck. The following list describes various tournament formats and how each can be used.

Constructed Event

Team events using a Constructed format should challenge the team to work together in deck construction. So while team events can use any of the Constructed formats including Classic (Type I), Standard (Type II), Classic Restricted (Type 1.5), or Alice (*Ice Age/Alliances*), you may wish to place deck-construction restrictions on the players. You might allow only five non-basic land cards from each expansion, for example, or the DCI Restricted List might apply to the team as a whole (allowing only one Zuran Orb per team, for example).

Limited Event

Team events can also use a Limited format with any combination of cards. In these types of events you can have several combinations. You could have one team member playing Alice Sealed Deck,

another playing *Fourth Edition* and *Chronicles*, and a third playing *Fourth Edition*, *Fallen Empires*, and *Homelands*. In this format each team member usually gets his or her own cards and builds his or her own deck. But that doesn't need to always be the case.

Another interesting format is to give the team a set of sealed cards from which decks are built for the entire team. For example, you could give the team five *Ice Age* starters and five *Chronicles* boosters, from which the team can build three decks (one for each member). This kind of format is ideal for testing teamwork in deck construction. Team members are forced to make some interesting decisions, such as whether to build five equally strong decks or to sacrifice two of the decks to build three strong ones.

Combined Event

You can implement varied formats in a team event by conducting a combination of formats. In a Combined format, part of the team can be playing one format while the other part is playing another. For example, you could have a five-person team event with two members playing Sealed and the other three playing Constructed. You can even go so far as to have each player in the event playing a different format: Classic, Standard, Classic Restricted, Alice Sealed Deck, and *Fourth Edition* and *Chronicles* Sealed Deck.



Themes

You can also have themes for deck construction. An *Alliances* theme, for instance, would require all decks to include ten *Alliances* cards. Another theme is color, where each deck has to be mono-color.

Structure

Team events can be run using any tournament structure: Swiss-style pairings, single-elimination, etc. The only difference is that you use the team's overall record for advancement. Basically, you use the individual match results in a team event, just as you would normally use game results for scoring. To help ensure that you do not end up with several ties each round, it's better to have an odd number of team members.

From the Library of Leng

Serra Angel

THE TEMPLE OF SERRA

In Dominaria, when people hear the name "Darien's Roost," they usually don't think of the small mountain town built during the peacemaking between Kjeldor and Balduvia; rather, they recognize it as Epityr, where the temple of Serra with the most compelling history resides. But the small town's original claim to fame was as the first Kjeldoran outpost allowed to be constructed in the Karplusan Mountains—an ideal trading location

and whose courage and skill in battle helped liberate Epityr that day.

The uprising in Epityr signaled the end of Sheoltun's occupation of eastern Terisiare. The empire had overreached itself, and it collapsed within a few hundred years. From its ashes a new empire has grown, equally militaristic and bent on expansion. Today we know it as Benalia.

Now the temple of Serra is a landmark of Epityr, known for its awesome beauty. Built at the base of a huge sculpture of Serra carved into the

destruction and recycling to hold out long after normal decks give up. It should even last quite a long time against tournament decks.

Here's how it works:

1. Get out a Serra Angel.
2. Keep extra land in your hand; then cast Armageddon.
3. Keep putting out creatures and use banding to keep them alive.
4. When your deck looks slim, use Feldon's Cane to recycle it all.

As long as you're aggressive from the start, this deck should keep your opponent under pressure. If you don't win quickly, just hang on and keep playing—the deck is also good at stalling. You will eventually run your opponent out of cards or else stall your opponent into absolute frustration! —Jon Wilkie

FASTER, PUSSYCAT! KILL! KILL!

3 Armageddon	1 Black Vise
3 Benalish Hero	3 Feldon's Cane
1 Crusade	2 Howling Mine
2 Disenchant	4 Meekstone
3 Kjeldoran Warrior	1 Nevinyrral's Disk
1 Land Tax	4 Marble Diamond
4 Mesa Pegasus	1 Zuran Orb
2 Pikemen	16 Plains
3 Serra Angel	2 Sheltered Valley
3 Swords to Plowshares	1 Strip Mine
2 Mtenda Herder	

for both Kjeldor and Balduvia.

Over the span of three centuries, Darien's Roost grew into the prosperous town of Epityr, a place allied solely to the descendants of Kjeldor. Eventually, however, the powerful Sheoltun Empire saw the strategic advantage of controlling Epityr and sent emissaries demanding that the town surrender to their expansionist nation. The people of Epityr agreed under duress and were forced to model their culture after the Sheoltun way of life.

Finally, after forty years of oppression, the song wizard Thabit of Almaaz was able to organize a successful rebellion against the Sheoltuns—a rebellion that ended with a miracle. Thabit's magical songs brought forth the Serra angels, whose wings blotted out the sun during an entire day of fighting

mountain face, the structure accommodates dozens of priests and priestesses and is visited by thousands of worshippers each year. It is one of the most active worship sites to Serra in all of Dominaria, and it is widely believed that if Epityr is ever truly threatened, Serra herself will appear with all her angels and defeat the enemies of those under her care. —Scott Hungerford

PLAYING WITH SERRA ANGEL

"Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!" is a deck designed to annoy your opponent. It's basically a banding, white weenie deck with Serra Angels that also uses land



FROM THE PAINTBRUSH

I've always been interested in depicting the powers of heaven and hell, so it was only natural that I chose the Serra Angel to paint. Whereas demons are usually depicted as huge and grotesque, angels are seen as serene, beautiful creations, commanding respect without ever having to demonstrate their ability.

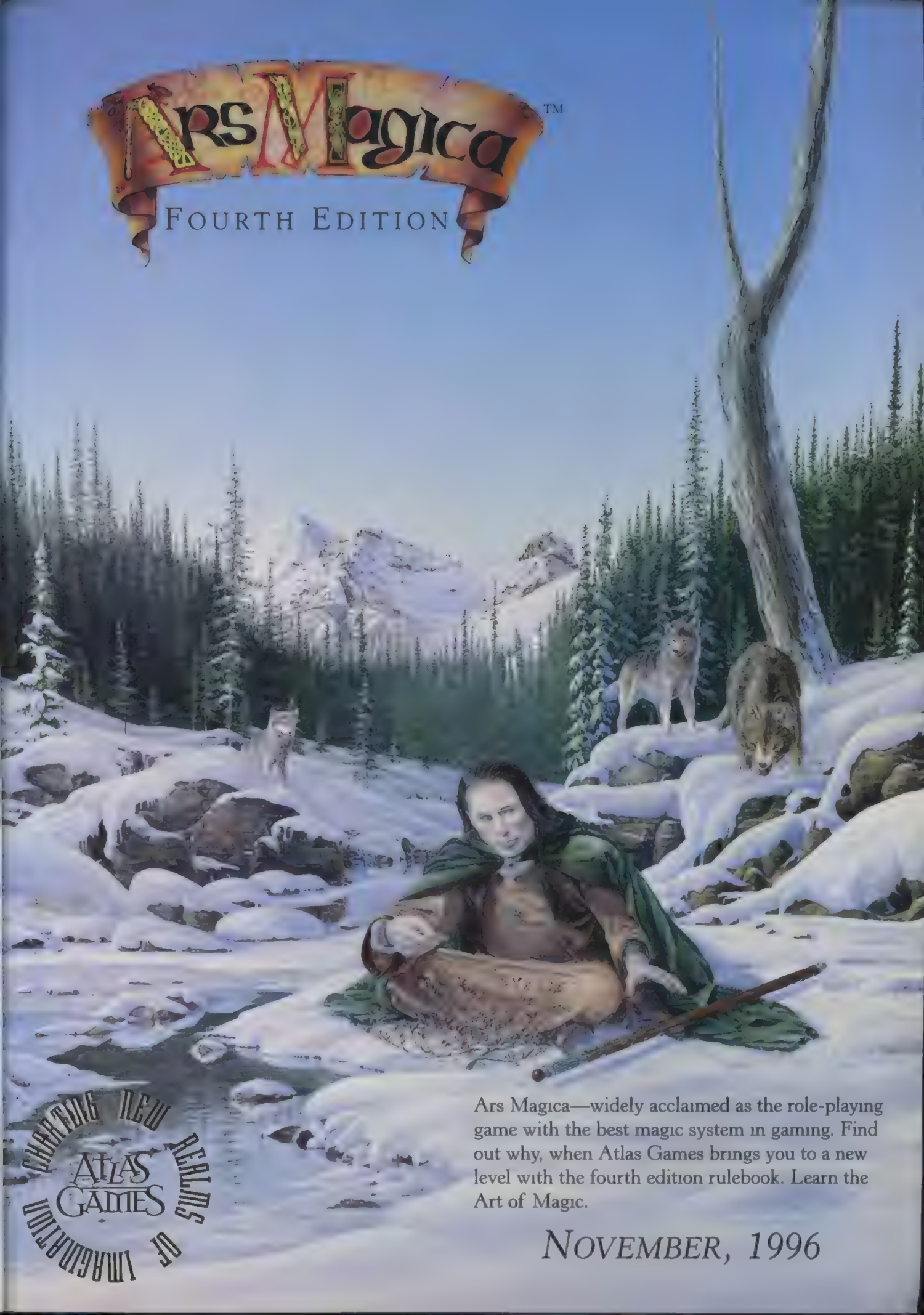
When I painted the Serra Angel, I chose to explore the specific dichotomy of power and grace all rolled into one. She assumes a feminine form: powerful and willing to prove it through her sword of justice, but graceful enough that she doesn't need to wear armor. I also enjoy painting clothing that has a sense of asymmetry, so I gave her only one sleeve.

There's a rumor that when the Serra Angel was created, she was supposed to be "serrated" and therefore covered with sharp blades. When I was assigned the illustration, she was only called "Angel"; the "Serra" part of her name didn't get added until later.

—Douglas Shuler

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Magic Rulings & Errata

A Summary of Recent, Significant Rulings

compiled by Tom Wylie

GENERAL RULINGS

The following rulings are meant to clarify the rulebook and how the game works.

- 1) **My opponent enchants my Kjeldoran Dead with False Demise and then Incinerates it. I also have a Soul Net in play. Since it's my opponent's turn, the False Demise will be triggered before Soul Net, but when do I sacrifice a creature?**

You sacrifice a creature after False Demise's effect resolves but before Soul Net's effect does. If the resolution of a triggered effect causes new effects to be triggered, the new

effects are resolved before any other triggered effects. In this example, the Dead's "when it comes into play, sacrifice a creature" effect would resolve before the Soul Net's effect could be used, as it is triggered during the resolution of the False Demise effect.

- 2) **Assuming I choose to discard a card when my Balduvian Hordes comes into play, can I take advantage of Library of Leng to discard that card onto my library?**

Yes. Discards that are part of an effect resolution are considered forced, even if you are allowed to do something instead of discarding. Because you don't discard a card for the Hordes until they resolve (come into play), you are considered to be forced to discard the card, even though you can bury the Hordes instead.

REVERSALS

The following rulings reverse past rulings from the rules team and/or netreps.

- 3) **If my Nafs Asp damages my opponent in combat, how many times can it damage my opponent? The Asp's effect will continue to damage your opponent until he or she pays 1 to stop the effect, even if the Asp leaves play. This is because the characteristics of the effect (including its color and the fact that it "cascades") are locked in when the Asp's damage is dealt.**

- 4) **Does Copy Artifact remain blue when it comes into play?**

No. A copy card copies the color of its target unless the text indicates otherwise. Thus, Copy Artifact typically becomes colorless when it comes into play.

CARD ERRATA

The following rulings involve card errata and slightly new readings of cards.

- 5) **Why is Dance of Many's target chosen when the enchantment comes into play instead of when the enchantment is played?**
It is chosen when the enchantment is played.
- 6) **If Titania's Song leaves play while Stasis is in play, do the artifacts ever stop being creatures?**
If Titania's Song leaves play, its effects only last until the end of the turn.
- 7) **Shouldn't Daring Apprentice's ability say, "Play this ability as an interrupt"?**
Yes.



ON THE LINE WITH Customer Service



SPECIFIC CARD RULINGS

8) Suppose my Sheltered Valley is enchanted with Phantasmal Terrain and I put another Sheltered Valley into play. If the enchantment is removed, does either Valley get buried?

No. If a Sheltered Valley is converted to another land type and then reverts to being a Sheltered Valley, it is not considered to be "coming into play," so it will not bury any other Sheltered Valleys you might control. (The similar rule that governs legendary lands does not apply to Sheltered Valley.)

9) When I cast Mind Warp on my opponent, who chooses the order that the cards go into the graveyard?

Your opponent chooses.

10) If my opponent plays Brainstorm while Zur's Weirding is in play and puts one of the cards drawn back onto his or her library, can I pay 2 life to force the card to be discarded?

You can pay the life, but since the card is no longer in your opponent's hand it won't be discarded.

11) Can I sacrifice one copy of Oath of Lim-Dûl to another?

Yes. Essentially, "You cannot sacrifice Oath of Lim-Dûl in this way" should be read as "...to itself."



Now that you've had a chance to read the rules for *Mirage's* two new abilities, flanking and phasing, all those ideas for great combinations are starting to pile up in the back of your mind. But are you sure those strategies will work?

Flanking is by far the easier of the two new abilities to understand. Basically, if you attack with a creature with flanking and your opponent assigns anything other than another creature with flanking to block it, the blocker gets -1/-1 until the end of the turn.

Sounds simple enough, but here are some tidbits you'll want to think about:

The -1/-1 is not damage. It's not even a targeted effect. So protection from the flanker's color or from a card like Indestructible Aura won't help.

The blocker actually has to be assigned to block the flanker. If a flanker is in a band with another attacking creature, the defending player can assign his or her creature to block the other attacking creature, and the flanker won't do anything to the blocker. Even though blocking one creature in the band still blocks the whole band, flanking depends on blocker assignment, and the assignment doesn't actually carry over to the other members of the band.

The application of the -1/-1 is resolved when the block is declared, and if one of the flankers loses flanking after the block is declared, the blocker still gets -1/-1. Also, even if the -1 toughness kills the blocking creatures, the attacking creature is still considered to have been blocked.

That was the easy part. Now let's talk about phasing.

The Ins and Outs of Phasing

Phasing sounds really simple on the surface: "Phasing causes permanents to enter and leave play on their own." The easiest

thing about phasing is that permanents with phasing leave play if they were in play, or enter play if they were out of play, at the beginning of your untap phase (for your permanents) and at the beginning of your opponent's untap phase (for your opponent's permanents).

It also involves permanents leaving play, but that part's fairly simple: enchantments, counters, and permanent effects (such as having been Laced or Hacked or Sleighted) remain on the card, even though it's out of play. But anything that relies on that card's being in play (such as the Sea Serpent looking for islands) immediately ends when the phasing permanent

leaves play. (So you'd lose your Sea Serpent if your last island phased out of play.) And, as always, if there's an "at end of turn" effect waiting to resolve on a creature that's out of play, it just doesn't happen.

Now you know what happens when a permanent phases out. Still with us? Then let's talk about when a permanent phases in.

If a permanent was phased out at the beginning of its controller's untap phase, it phases back in immediately, in whatever state it was in when it left play. So if your phasing artifact was tapped when it left play at the beginning of your last untap phase, it comes back into play tapped at the beginning of your next untap phase and will then untap.

Now here's the part where you'll probably want to be sitting down: If a permanent phases into play, it isn't treated as though it just came into play. That is, you wouldn't choose a new creature for a Vesuvan Doppelganger to copy, you wouldn't have to sacrifice another swamp to a Lake of the Dead, and a Polar Kraken wouldn't come into play tapped. Note that that's only if your permanent *phased out* of play. And even better, creatures that phase into play won't have summoning sickness!



Flanking and Phasing

As usual, if you have any questions about these rules—or any rules for any of Wizards of the Coast's games—call Wizards Customer Service at (206) 624-0933, M-F, 9 A.M.–6 P.M. (PST), or by sending email to <questions@wizards.com>.

Deck Clinic

by Henry Stern and Charlie Catino

In this issue's installment of "Deck Clinic," the patient is a mono-green creature deck from Andy Spina of Lake Orion, MI. If you'd like to see your deck tuned in "Deck Clinic," send a list of the deck's contents and a description of the deck to "Deck Clinic," c/o The Duelist, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057, or to <duelist@wizards.com>.

"GREEN MACHINE"

Andy Spina
Lake Orion, MI

Land

19 Forest

Green

- 1 Aspect of Wolf
- 2 Birds of Paradise
- 4 Craw Wurm
- 1 Erhnam Djinn
- 3 Fanatical Fever
- 1 Forbidden Lore
- 1 Fyndhorn Elder
- 3 Fyndhorn Elves
- 2 Giant Growth
- 2 Hurricane
- 4 Juniper Order Druid
- 1 Ley Druid
- 3 Llanowar Elves
- 1 Lure
- 4 Scaled Wurm
- 1 Stampede
- 4 Wild Growth
- 1 Yavimaya Gnats

Artifact

- 1 The Rack
- 1 Soldevi Simulacrum

HENRY

In tuning "Green Machine," I stuck to the theme of an all-green, Standard-legal (Type II-legal) deck. However, a number of significant changes were made.

All Creatures Great and Small. The heart and soul of any green deck is its creatures. "Green Machine" has a fatal design flaw in its creature mix, with fourteen 1/1 elf-like creatures, two medium-sized critters, and eight big guns. It's designed to win by getting out a Craw Wurm or Scaled Wurm quickly and, ideally, winning with it, but the problem with this type of strategy is that those 1/1 creatures can be ignored or, even worse, held off by a lone Tundra Wolf or Mishra's Factory.

Once you get around to casting your big creature, it can often be easily dealt with by Terror or Swords to Plowshares. And it gets even worse if your opponent has spells capable of destroying many creatures at once, such as Wrath of God or Nevinyrral's Disk. Plus, with just nineteen land cards in the deck, if your opponent does manage to wipe out all of your mana-producing creatures, it could be a long time before you can cast one of your big guns.

The solution? Use creatures with a variety of casting costs, including several that are solid offensive threats. Six mana elves is about the right number for this type of deck, as you want to be sure you get one in your opening draw. In keeping with the concepts discussed above, I have

removed all of the Druids from the deck as well as the Birds of Paradise. (Of course, in a mono-green deck, those two Birds of Paradise should have been elves anyway). These have been replaced with a number of flexible creatures, including Scavenger Folk, Elvish Archers, and Woolly Spiders.

"Green Machine" also had eight Wurms that cost six or more mana to cast. These have been replaced by upping the number of Erhnams to four and adding four Yavimaya Ants, two Lhurgoyf, and one Kaysa. As I've mentioned in previous "Deck Clinic" articles, if you have green in your deck and are using creatures, then you should probably have four Erhnam Djinn. At 4/5 for just four mana, Erhnam Djinn is one of the most efficient creatures in the game. Yavimaya Ants are simply incredible for mono-green decks: since they can attack on the turn they come into play, you can often catch your opponent unprepared.

There is nothing better than to attack with your Ants, have your opponent block with, say, a Black Knight, and then watch him cringe when you cast Giant Growth, killing his creature and doing 6 points of trample damage. And unlike Ball Lightning, the Ants can come back again and again. Two Lhurgoyfs round out the creature mix. While not especially strong in the beginning of the game, in a deck with this many creatures, those two Lhurgoyfs will often get huge. Kaysa is a walking Crusade for green, but its Legend status and casting cost preclude using more in the deck.

Minimal Spells. Since "Green Machine" has so many creatures, there isn't much

room left for spells. Thus, you want the spells you do use to be effective. The original deck used two Giant Growths, three Fanatical Fevers, and one Stampede. In general, Giant Growth is the most effective of these spells, and I wouldn't use either of the other two until I already had four Giant Growths. The new deck only has room for three. Also, since "Green Machine" can do a lot of damage early, Hurricane becomes a great closing spell. (It's also one of your best weapons against flyers.) The two Sylvan Librarys also can be used to make sure your next draw is a good one. Don't be afraid to pay the 4 life for the extra card if your opponent is playing a slow deck; and remember that since the Thawing Glaciers allows you to shuffle your library, you can look at three new cards every turn.

More Land Yet Again.

Once again, Charlie and I are faced with a deck with too little land. Even though the Elves, Druids, and Wild Growths can provide mana, they are not land. Also, as a general principle, most mono-color decks should use Mishra's Factory as a defense against creature mass-destruction effects. Finally, the new deck uses three Thawing Glaciers. In a mono-color deck, the Glaciers essentially allow you to Land Tax for one card every other turn. As long as your opponent isn't using global land-nuke spells like Armageddon or Jokulhaups, you should use the Glaciers to get every Forest out of your deck. If your opponent does use Armageddon, you should still use the Glaciers to get enough land to cast all of your spells, but save a few of these until after your opponent casts Armageddon.

CHARLIE

This issue's patient, "Green Machine," is a very straightforward deck: its strengths and weaknesses are readily apparent and quite extreme. Its obvious strengths are:

Lots of creatures. This deck is able to play so many creatures that it will probably overwhelm the creature destruction of other decks.

Big creatures. The deck has big creatures, which other decks can find hard to handle with direct damage or with their creatures.

Speed. The deck can get lots of creatures out quickly with all of its fast mana, and it can get its big creatures out very quickly.

Its obvious weaknesses are:

Lots of creatures, part 1. The deck relies *only* on creatures to kill the opponent.

Lots of creatures, part 2. The deck is very susceptible to mass creature-destruction.

Big creatures. Although the deck has big creatures, it doesn't have very many of them. Not only is a player using this deck vulnerable to not drawing enough big creatures, but those he or she does get into play might be killed.

In some ways decks with such clear-cut strengths and weakness can be fixed somewhat differently than other decks. For example, in the past if a deck was susceptible to mass creature-destruction I would advise players to put in cards that either prevented mass destruction from working well or that helped them to recover quickly from it.

With this deck, however, our goal is different: we want to cast so many creatures so quickly that we kill our opponent before she can play her mass-destruction spells. We'll put in so many

creatures—and so many *big* creatures—that even if your opponent can exploit your weaknesses, she won't be able to do so quickly enough, and you'll be able to recover quickly.

Fast Mana: No Need.

The original deck had a ton of fast mana but not many big creatures or spells to be cast with it. So I removed some of the fast mana: Ley Druids and Wild Growths (which are only good if you get them in combo and are vulnerable to the very popular Strip Mine). Since I still wanted plenty of fast mana I put in a couple of Nature's Lores, which I like because they are cheap (you only lose one mana the turn you play them) and because they help decrease the ratio of lands in your library: after you play one, each time you draw a card it is slightly more likely to be a creature.

I cut most of the big green creatures in "Green Machine" so that I could add other green creatures. Just because a deck does one thing particularly well (such as getting out big creatures quickly) doesn't mean it shouldn't do other things too. The best way to increase this deck's versatility was to put in a variety of big creatures that cost from two to six mana, so I added Spectral Bears, more Erhnam Djinn, Yavimaya Ants, Lhurgoyfs, Deadly Insects, a Yavimaya Ancient, a Folk of the Pine, an Elvish Bard, a Kaysa, a Johtull Wurm, a Craw Wurm, an Autumn Willow, and a Force of Nature. These are all big green creatures that are hard for opponents to handle and that have useful special abilities. This huge variety of creatures combined with the sheer size of them makes a combination I hope your

THE DOCTORS ARE IN

"Green Machine," a mono-green deck with lots of creatures, undergoes a thorough examination.

HENRY'S DECK

Land

- 17 Forest
- 4 Mishra's Factory
- 1 Strip Mine
- 3 Thawing Glaciers

Green

- 3 Elvish Archers
- 4 Erhnam Djinn
- 2 Fyndhorn Elves
- 3 Giant Growth
- 4 Hurricane
- 1 Kaysa
- 2 Lhurgoyf
- 4 Llanowar Elves
- 3 Scavenger Folk
- 2 Sylvan Library
- 3 Woolly Spider
- 4 Yavimaya Ants

CHARLIE'S DECK

Land

18 Forest

Green

- 1 Autumn Willow
- 1 Bounty of the Hunt
- 1 Craw Wurm
- 2 Deadly Insects
- 1 Elvish Bard
- 4 Erhnam Djinn
- 1 Folk of the Pine
- 1 Force of Nature
- 1 Fyndhorn Elder
- 4 Fyndhorn Elves
- 4 Giant Growth
- 2 Hurricane
- 1 Johtull Wurm
- 1 Kaysa
- 3 Llanowar Elves
- 2 Lhurgoyf
- 2 Nature's Lore
- 1 Skull Catapult
- 3 Spectral Bears
- 1 Stampede
- 1 Tranquility
- 1 Winter Blast
- 1 Yavimaya Ancient
- 3 Yavimaya Ants

opponent will not be able to handle.

The other things I added were a couple of Giant Growths and a Bounty of the Hunt. I would rather improve the creature content of the deck with cards like these than with more vulnerable cards like Aspect of Wolf. Also, I usually like to put one "pitch card" in a deck because it helps make use of cards that might not be useful otherwise.

Add Anti-Flying Cards.

There were not quite enough anti-flying cards in the deck, so I added Winter Blast, which is good against flying and which also helps your deck deliver the finishing blow. I added one Tranquility in order to get rid of Control Magic, CoP: Green, and Pestilence.

Lastly, I added a Skull Catapult. When your deck has a lot of creatures, Skull Catapult helps in four ways: 1) if your opponent tries to kill one of your creatures with direct damage you can respond by sacrificing the creature and dealing 2 damage; 2) if your opponent can cast enough creatures to stall your attacks, Skull Catapult helps you to break the stalemate or even win slowly, even if you cannot attack; 3) it gives you something to do with the Elves you draw in the middle and end of the game; and 4) it makes Lhurgoyfs more powerful.

Henry Stern liked doing "Deck Clinic" so much that he moved to Renton and joined Charlie Catino on WotC's Research and Development team.

Tournament News

Official Changes to the Banned and Restricted Lists

**EFFECTIVE
OCTOBER 1,
1996**

The DCI notifies its members of changes in the Classic (Type I) and Standard (Type II) Banned and Restricted Lists on specific dates each calendar year. For Classic, those dates are March 1 and September 1; for Standard, the dates are March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1.

STRIP MINE Restricted in Standard (Type II)

Restricting Strip Mine (*Fourth Edition*) echoes the DCI's Black Vise decision earlier this year: Strip Mine is so generally effective that an overwhelming majority



of tournament players include it in their decks, regardless of the deck's theme or purpose. Its tremendous ability to provide an early game swing—not to mention the fact that it cannot be countered—makes the card too attractive to ignore.

HYMN TO TOURACH Restricted in Standard (Type II)

Hymn to Tourach (*Fallen Empires*) has been the center of more controversy than any other single card in the later half of the 1995–96 tournament season. Competitors began to suggest its restriction shortly after the first Pro Tour event



in New York, primarily because the card was seen by many as the cornerstone of the popular and successful "Necrodeck." Many DCI members expected its restriction on June 1 but were surprised when the DCI decided to restrict Land Tax but not Hymn to Tourach.

DCI explained that, at that time, it lacked sufficient data on Hymn's true influence in the Standard (Type II) tournament environment. Necrodecks had barely started to dominate tournaments, and *Alliances* had not yet been released, giving rise to the possibility that new card combinations and deck designs would emerge to challenge Necrodecks. Moreover, the actual cause of Necro's success was still open to speculation: Some competitors claimed it was the result of several other cards, while others theorized that it was due to the sheer number of competitors (particularly top-

ranked players) who used the deck.

The conclusion of the 1995–96 season and the release of *Alliances* gives the DCI more information on which to base a decision. Hymn to Tourach's impact is more readily visible: One need only recall the semifinals match at the '96 U.S. Nationals between Dennis Bentley and Matt Place to witness the Hymn's early-game-swing advantage, as well as its strong ability to stifle new deck-construction ideas.

FASTBOND Restricted in Classic (Type I)

Fastbond (*Revised*) has occupied a spot on the DCI's "most watched" list for some time. Fastbond is similar to Channel in its ability to create grossly overpowered, game-winning combinations. This is most obvious when Fastbond is used in conjunction with Storm Cauldron, effectively creating a Channel for colored mana, with preventable damage.



Chanpheng Is New World Champ

"I got the card, I got the card! I can't believe it!" said Tom Chanpheng following the awards ceremony where he was presented the one-of-a-kind 1996 World Champion Magic card and trophy, as well as the winner's share of \$26,000. Chanpheng, a little-known 19-year-old student from Brisbane, Australia, had just swept 1995 World Championships semifinalist and 1995 U.S. Nationals Champion Mark Justice of West Valley City, Utah, 3–0, in the finals of the 1996 Magic: The Gathering World Championships.

It seemed like Chanpheng could do no wrong. Take, for instance, the crucial (and back-breaking) second game during the finals. After winning the first duel, Chanpheng, playing a white-weenie deck against Justice's red/black Necrodeck, had mana problems (due in no small part to several Strip Mines on Justice's part, which stripped away his first two plains). With no colored mana available, Justice pounded on Chanpheng with a couple of Black Knights until the life totals stood at 22–5.

With Balance in his hand, Chanpheng finally drew his third plains of the game, laid it down, and cast Balance, wiping out Justice's creatures and all of his lands. "I was about to concede. I thought I had no chance, but I drew the right cards," Chanpheng said.

In response to Balance, Justice executed a bizarre move—he cast two Demonic Consultations simultaneously, both for Dark Rituals. (See "Key Plays," p. 33.)

What ended up happening,

DCI Banned & Restricted Lists



Cards from the original basic set are included in the Type II Banned List, even though they may not be available in *Fourth Edition*.

however, was that Justice didn't get the second Dark Ritual until he'd removed all but four cards from his library. With his land gone and no way of winning within four turns, Justice conceded two turns later.

For all of the second game's suspense, the third game was quite anticlimactic. Justice drew only one swamp while Chanpheng got his deck rolling, throwing out five White Knights and Order of Leitburs. The game lasted all of seven turns.

Råde Wins Pro Tour 'Player of the Year'

As a way to determine the most proficient Player of the Year, Wizards of the Coast officials have devised a point-scoring system that allows Pro Tour players to chart their progress throughout the year. At the close of the World Championships, all Player of the Year points for the past season are added up, and a Pro Tour Player of the Year is crowned.

Olle Råde, a 17-year-old student from Göteborg, Sweden, earned the 1995-96 Pro Tour Player of the Year award based on his outstanding performances at just two of the four stops on this year's schedule. Råde's prize includes round-trip airfare and hotel accommodations to all five stops on the 1996-97 Pro Tour circuit.

Asked what he plans to do with his combined prize winnings (\$31,000),

Råde just shrugged his shoulders.

"I haven't really decided. I still live at home, so maybe I'll go out and buy an apartment or

something—when I'm allowed to, that is."



Classic (Type I) Restricted

Ancestral Recall
Balance
Berserk
Black Lotus
Braingeyser
Candelabra of Tawnos
Copy Artifact
Demonic Tutor
Fastbond
Feldon's Cane
Fork
Ivory Tower
Library of Alexandria
Maze of Ith
Mirror Universe
Mishra's Workshop
Mox Emerald
Mox Jet
Mox Pearl
Mox Ruby
Mox Sapphire
Recall
Regrowth
Sol Ring
Timetwister
Time Walk
Underworld Dreams
Wheel of Fortune
Zuran Orb

Classic (Type I) Banned

Amulet of Quoz
Bronze Tablet
Channel
Chaos Orb
Contract from Below
Darkpact
Demonic Attorney
Divine Intervention
Falling Star
Jeweled Bird
Mind Twist
Rebirth
Shahrazad
Tempest Efreet
Timmerian Fiends

Standard (Type II) Restricted

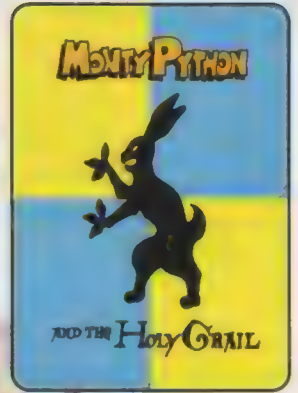
Balance
Black Vise
Hymn to Tourach
Ivory Tower
Land Tax
Strip Mine
Zuran Orb

Standard (Type II) Banned

Amulet of Quoz
Ancestral Recall
Atog
Badlands
Basalt Monolith
Bayou
Berserk
Black Lotus
Blaze of Glory
Braingeyser
Bronze Tablet
Camouflage
Chaos Orb
Channel
Clone
Consecrate Land
Contract from Below
Copper Tablet
Copy Artifact
Cyclopean Tomb
Darkpact
Demonic Attorney
Demonic Hordes
Demonic Tutor
Dwarven Demolition Team
Dwarven Weaponsmith
Earthbind
False Orders
Falling Star
Farmstead
Fastbond
Forcefield
Fork
Gauntlet of Might
Granite Gargoyle
Guardian Angel
Ice Storm
Illusionary Mask
Invisibility

Jade Statue
Jandor's Ring
Juggernaut
Kird Ape
Kudzu
Lance
Lich
Living Wall
Mijae Djinn
Mind Twist
Mox Emerald
Mox Jet
Mox Pearl
Mox Ruby
Mox Sapphire
Natural Selection
Nettling Imp
Plateau
Psionic Blast
Raging River
Rebirth
Reconstruction
Regrowth
Resurrection
Reverse Polarity
Roc of Kher Ridges
Rock Hydra
Rocket Launcher
Sacrifice
Savannah
Scrubland
Sedge Troll
Serendib Efreet
Shatterstorm
Sinkhole
Sol Ring
Taiga
Tempest Efreet
Timetwister
Time Vault
Time Walk
Timmerian Fiends
Tropical Island
Tundra
Two-Headed Giant of Foriys
Underground Sea
Vesuvan Doppelganger
Veteran Bodyguard
Volcanic Island
Wheel of Fortune
Word of Command

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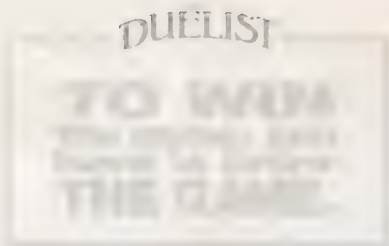
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THE DUELIST

compiled by
Jeff J. Linn

Key Plays

Close matches are often decided when one player makes a critical move, a key play that tips the balance of a game.

Sometimes it's a crucial error, like a spell cast too soon or a miscalculated declaration of blockers. Sometimes it's just a shrewd maneuver, like a well-played bluff or an obscure timing trick. Whatever the particular key play is, it decides the game and becomes the subject of debate for the rest of the tournament. This issue's key play occurred in the second game of the finals at the 1996 Magic World Championships, in a match-up between former U.S. Champion Mark Justice and Australian team member (and now 1996 World Champion) Tom Chanpheng.



If you see or hear about a particularly interesting key play, write to us about it at "Key Plays," c/o The Duelist, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057, or <duelist@wizards.com>.

AFTER WINNING THE FIRST DUEL, Chanpheng, playing a white weenie deck against Justice's red/black Necrodeck, had mana problems (due in no small part to several Strip Mines of Justice's, which stripped away his first two plains). With no colored mana available, Justice pounded Chanpheng with a couple of Black Knights until the life totals stood at 22-5. Chanpheng would stave off death for several turns, however, with a Zuran Orb and by drawing a Mishra's Factory and a Strip Mine at just the right time.

With Balance in his hand, Chanpheng finally drew his third plains of the game, laid it down, and cast Balance, wiping out both of Justice's creatures and all of his lands. "I was about to concede. I thought I had no chance, but I drew the right cards," Chanpheng said later. "I drew Strip Mine to animate my Mishra's Factory. I drew another one and really needed the plains, and I drew the plains."

In response to Balance, Justice executed a bizarre move: he cast two Demonic Consultations simultaneously, both for Dark Rituals. "I felt if I could draw the Dark Rituals, I could get out Ihsan's Shade and it'd be the game because he had nothing that could take care of an Ihsan's Shade," Justice explained. "I knew I still had to have a land [to cast Ihsan's Shade], but I figured I'd get the two Dark Rituals, and I'd draw a land within one or two or maybe three turns."

What ended up happening, however, was that Justice didn't get the second Dark Ritual until he'd removed all but four cards from his library. With his land gone and no way of winning within four turns, Justice conceded two turns later. "There was a lot of suspense," said Chanpheng. "[While Justice was using his Demonic Consultation] it was like he had a gun to my head."

"I didn't expect it [the second Dark Ritual] to be at the bottom of the deck because there were four Dark Rituals left [when I Consulted]," Justice said. "I felt that I had to win right then because I only had half my mana remaining in my deck, and he had a lot because he hadn't been drawing any. I was really low on creatures—I only had three Black Knights and four Hypnotic Specters [in the deck]—and two of them had just got "Balanced" away. I had two Ihsan's Shades, so I was thinking, 'If I just go one by one by one, he's going to beat me,' and I bet you he would have."

"What I should've done—if I was going to go kooky and take a chance like that—is Consult for a Strip Mine three turns earlier, stripped the Mishra's Factories, hit him—boom, he's dead. But two Strip Mines were already gone, so the odds were one in thirty-six that both Strip Mines would be in the first six.

"It was a judgment call, and I made the wrong call. It happens. If it goes off right, I look like a genius. If it doesn't, well..."

Single-Card Strategies

by JEFF FRANZMANN

Ivory Gargoyle



The gremlin stalked off, insulted, to explore the darkened corners of the rooftop observatory. A pale red glow in one corner caught its attention, and it hopped off to investigate. As Canticle continued his examination

of the skull, the gremlin found, buried beneath the clutter, an Ivory Gargoyle.

Once in play, Ivory Gargoyle is nearly impossible for your opponent to destroy without using Disintegrate, Swords to Plowshares, or Exile, since it bounces from the graveyard back to your hand. This means that you can count on it to stick around.

To make Ivory Gargoyle a recurring nightmare for your opponent, you simply need to combine a little thought with the willingness to make sacrifices. Even Jokulhaups, which destroys all lands, creatures, and artifacts, can't get rid of it for good. Most likely, this means that you'll be controlling the most powerful creature in play for some time as you and your opponent rebuild your resources. Nevinyrral's Disk and Armageddon, when used together, will produce the same effect. Similarly, cast Balance when your opponent has no creatures in play. First, attack with your Gargoyle; then tap enough land to cast Balance, sack all of your land to a Zuran Orb, and watch Balance take its toll. The Ivory Gargoyle, of course, will come back into play. Wrath of God serves a similar purpose, especially if your opponent has several creatures in play and the only ones you have are Ivory Gargoyles. Ivory Gargoyle also works wonderfully as a victim for Pox or as food for Lord of the Pit or Fallen Angel.

An angry red glow pulsed in the gargoyle's eye, and the gremlin scrambled under the table where Canticle was working. The necromancer shook his head in disgust. "I should have taken the cat."

Single-Card Strategies

by JEFF FRANZMANN

Ashen Ghoul

A gremlin sat atop Canticle's desk, sticking its spindly finger into the eye socket of a skull. The necromancer shooed it away, and the gremlin retreated. Normally, Canticle was not nearly so abrupt, but it wasn't often that he had the opportunity to fathom the mysteries of the Ashen Ghoul.



Ashen Ghoul can attack on the turn it comes into play, so a Dark Ritual in the opening hand can let you deal a relatively large amount of damage early in the game. In addition, if you know your opponent is going to interrupt your attack by tapping or Unsummoning a creature, you can summon your Ashen Ghoul and declare your attack all over again.

While powerful, this ability is not nearly as versatile as its ability to come back from the grave. If Krovikan Horror from *Alliances* is in play, for example, you can attack with Ashen Ghoul, sacrifice it to Krovikan Horror to deal additional damage, and then bring another Ghoul back from the graveyard to perform the same operation.

In decks that make heavy use of sacrifice, Ashen Ghoul's recursion ability is even more effective. You can power a Fallen Angel by recycling Ashen Ghoul, produce tremendous amounts of generic mana with Ashnod's Altar, and make better use of Soldevi Adnate when the creatures it destroys can come back. Also, if you have a swamp in hand and enough Ghoul in the graveyard to begin the recycling process, cast Jokulhaups and clear the playing field. During your next upkeep you'll be able to bring back a Ghoul. This tactic also works with Balance and Wrath of God, and it gets even better when you sacrifice Ashen Ghoul to a card like Skull Catapult in response to their casting.

One of the biggest threats to Ashen Ghoul is Swords to Plowshares, since it removes the creature from the game. But you can use Despot's Scepter in response to the Swords to bury the Ghoul or, better yet, to sacrifice it.

Just in case you don't get to search the world much, Wizards of the Coast has done the legwork for you and brought the results together in the *Magic: The Gathering Multiverse Gift Box*. Never been to France? Baron Sengir has, and he just might crop up in your French *Homelands* booster. Ever seen a Phelddagrif over Italy? Well, you might, in your Italian *Alliances* booster. Nicol Bolas might be waiting for you in your Japanese *Chronicles*, Killer Bees might swarm from your German *Renaissance* booster. And to round out your globe-trotting experience, from Jamuraa we have....

Jamuraa?

Yep. And it's not a mirage, either—it's a vision of the future. The new gift box, sporting an image of the magnificent King Cheetah by Terese Nielsen, contains two sneak-preview boosters of *Visions*, the next expansion for Magic. Not due until early 1997, *Visions* picks up where *Mirage* left off; in fact, the two sets were designed simultaneously, making them fit seamlessly together as if one set. The preview cards in the gift box are taken from a subset of twenty-five different cards from the *Visions* set—including the King Cheetah—to whet players' appetites for more. And while adding new cards, both foreign and domestic, to their collections, players who buy the new *Multiverse Gift Box* will also be adding something special to their Magic accessories: the box is designed to serve as a carry-over case for play decks.

The inclusion of the *Visions* preview boosters is likely to excite most Magic players, giving them a glimpse into a set still months away. So what should players expect from the next expansion?

"Unsummoning is a major theme of *Visions*," Bill Rose, co-designer of both *Mirage* and *Visions*, notes. "For example, the Viashino Sandstalker [a 4/2 red creature that is unaffected by unsummoning sickness and returns to your hand at the end of any turn] builds on that

theme. It's sort of like a Ball Lightning that doesn't die—and I'm sure it will be a hot card." Additionally, Mark Rosewater, co-developer for the sets, promises that atogs—one of which, the Foratog, appears in *Mirage*—will return again in *Visions*, and that atogs, like rats, may begin to appear regularly in each expansion set.

Players who purchase the *Multiverse Gift Box* will get a chance to test out the new theme of unsummoning with cards like Undo and Bull Elephant, a 4/4 green creature for only 3 ♣ that requires its caster to return two forests to his or her hand when the Bull Elephant comes into play.

"If you don't play a land the turn you cast it," advises Rose, "you can return one of the forests you tapped to pay for the Elephant to your hand and then simply replay it." Rose hints that Bull Elephant will work in some "interesting combos" when the full *Visions* set is released next year.

The *Magic: The Gathering Multiverse Gift Box* is scheduled for release in November and will retail for \$19.95. Compare this to the approximate \$4,500 it would cost you to travel to France, Germany, Italy, and Japan* to pick up these boosters (plus the cost of the boosters themselves!) and you've got the best deal Magic can buy. —Michael G. Ryan

*Ticket prices to Jamuraa were not available at press time

Visions Preview Cards

NAME	COLOR	TYPE	ARTIST	FREQUENCY
1. Dark Privilege	B	Enchant Creature	Tom Kyffin	Common
2. Necrosavant	B	Summon Necrosavant	John Coulthart	Rare
3. Urborg Mindsucker	B	Summon Mindsucker	Tony Diterlizzi	Common
4. Vampirism	B	Enchant Creature	Gary Leach	Uncommon
5. Wicked Reward	B	Instant	D. Alexander Gregory	Common
6. Knight of the Mists	U	Summon Knight	Harold McNeill	Common
7. Ovinomancer	U	Summon Sorcerer	Kevin Walker	Uncommon
8. Shrieking Drake	U	Summon Drake	Ian Miller	Common
9. Undo	U	Sorcery	Terese Nielsen	Common
10. Bull Elephant	G	Summon Elephant	Steven White	Common
11. Feral Instinct	G	Instant	Una Fricker	Common
12. Giant Caterpillar	G	Summon Caterpillar	Zina Saunders	Common
13. King Cheetah	G	Summon Cheetah	Terese Nielsen	Common
14. Lichenthropo	G	Summon Lichenthropo	Bob Eggleton	Rare
15. Undiscovered Paradise	L	Land	David O'Connor	Rare
16. Tempest Drake	M	Summon Drake	Gerry Grace	Uncommon
17. Goblin Recruiter	R	Summon Goblin	Scott Kirschner	Uncommon
18. Lightning Cloud	R	Enchantment	Steve Luke	Rare
19. Rock Slide	R	Instant	Mike Kerr	Common
20. Talruum Champion	R	Summon Minotaur	Pete Venters	Common
21. Viashino Sandstalker	R	Summon Viashino	Andrew Robinson	Uncommon
22. Gossamer Chains	W	Enchantment	Steve Luke	Common
23. Jamuraa Lion	W	Summon Lion	Stuart Griffin	Common
24. Peace Talks	W	Sorcery	Roger Raupp	Uncommon
25. Warrior's Honor	W	Instant	D. Alexander Gregory	Common

KEY: B=Black, M=Blue, G=Green, L=Land, U=Unsummoning, R=Red, W=White

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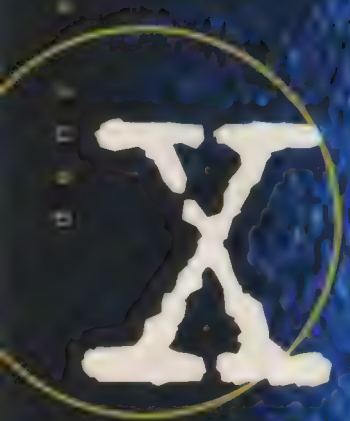
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MAGIC
The Gathering

by Chris Page



A card is a card. Or, to be less vague, one card fulfills the role of only one card, even in **Magic**. This resource limitation is part of the structure of **Magic**. But, like the rules of the English language, the rules in **Magic** are often broken, including the idea that one card is only one card. **Death Spark**, a surprisingly useful little spell, breaks that rule.

Death Spark

Not just another flash in the pan

Death Spark doesn't appear to be much (an instant that deals 1 damage to a target creature or player), but even 1 damage by itself is very useful. In blocking, often that 1 point makes all the difference. Or it'll be the 1 extra point to go with the Lightning Bolt to kill the Serra Angel. Or it's just 1 more point chewing against your opponent. More importantly, though, if you play your cards right, you can reuse **Death Spark**, thus defying the concept that a card is only good for one use. (If at the end of

The key to using **Death Spark** repeatedly is to make sure that after it's been cast a creature card always goes right on top of it in the graveyard. In a creature-heavy deck, even with random play, there's at least a fifty-fifty chance the **Death Spark** will wind up directly below a creature without your even thinking about it. But with a few basic tricks, you can greatly enhance the damage yield. The most basic trick is to cast **Death Spark** in response to your opponent's killing off of one of your creatures. You'll get the **Death Spark** back the next turn, and this sort of damage will start to erode your opponent's life total away. This is especially important in decks like weenie decks that tend to peter out on the last 4 or 5 damage. For those last few desperate points, you can send small creatures on suicide attacks against your opponent, confident that your opponent will take 1 damage from **Death Spark**, regardless of whether he or she blocks.

It's a good idea to have creatures in your deck that have sacrificial special abilities so that it's easy for you to recycle **Death Spark**. Not only do you get the special ability that you needed anyway, but you're also able to get **Death Spark** back for an extra point of damage. **Scavenger Folk** is just as good as a **Crumble**—plus it's a 1/1 creature. Similarly, think of **Goblin**

Chirurgeon or **Vigilant Martyr** instead of **Death Ward**; **Tinder Wall** or **Basal Thrull** as a variant for fast mana; **Floodgate** as a creature sweeper; **Gangrenous Zombies** as **Pyroclasm**; **Goblin Soothsayer** for **Morale**; **Flame Elemental** instead of a creature killer; **Daring Apprentice** for **Counterspell**; even **Goblin Digging Team** as **Tunnel**. The **Thrulls** (**Mindstab Thrull**, **Necrite**, and **Armor Thrull**) all complement **Death Spark** as well. The point is that a lot of your deck can be converted over to creatures if you're creative.

You can also get **Death Spark** back in your hand by implementing other cards that sacrifice creatures. **Skull Catapult**, **Fallen Angel**, **Phyrexian Vault**, **Ashnod's Altar**, **Homarid Spawning Bed**, **Lord of the Pit**, **Kjeldoran Dead**, **Goblin Grenade**, **Altar of Bone**, **Stone Giant**, **Ravenous Vampire**, and **Hecatomb** are but the tip of the iceberg. Choose creatures that are naturally going to expire from cumulative upkeep or some other means, such as **Flow of Maggots**, **Goblin Ski Patrol**, **Illusionary Forces**, or **Polar Kraken**. Or use creatures that give you a benefit when they go to the graveyard: **Onulet**, **Tarpan**, or the overpowered **Rukh Egg**. All of these are solid cards on their own, and they also enhance **Death Spark**, giving a steady flow of new creatures to be put above **Death Spark**.



upkeep, it's in your graveyard directly below a creature card, you may pay one mana to return it to your hand.) And if you cast **Death Spark** enough, cards that trigger from the casting of red spells (like **Iron Star**) suddenly become more attractive.

You may also want to get a cycle going in which you put a creature on top of Death Spark in the graveyard, and then cast Death Spark and get the same creature back above it again. Multiple Ashen Ghouls and Nether Shadows are the obvious examples, since they pop back into play when three creatures are above them. Far more mana-intensive is Mtenda Griffin, which will pull other Griffins out of the graveyard. Then there's Krovikan Horror, which will come back if there's a creature card directly on top of it; plus, you can sacrifice it or other creatures to itself to deal even more damage.

This may seem like a lot of effort for a card that deals just 1 damage, but you can also constantly cycle Death Spark through your hand, using it as a way to *be* more cards. For instance, imagine how many times you can have your opponent make you discard it from your hand using his or her Disrupting Scepter. Consider keeping it as a buffer against Hymn to Tourach or Hypnotic Specter, though here the discards are at random. Or use it to modulate your hand size when caught between Black Vise and The Rack.

The problem with those uses is that they're reactive: they depend on your opponent's having the right cards. It's better to have cards yourself that function well with the ever-discardable Death Spark. For instance, with Jalum Tome, which lets you pay 2 and discard a card to draw a card, you'll often be able to get Death Spark back, so you'll be spending only three mana to draw a card. Krovikan Sorcerer and Teferi's Imp work the same

way, only they're cheaper. And Mesmeric Trance and Unfulfilled Desires work even faster.

Any spell that requires a discard of cards works nicely with Death Spark, especially if you can discard a creature card at the same time. Use Recall to drop two Death Sparks and a creature from your hand, and then bring the Death Sparks back. Or try the same trick with Wheel of Fortune. You can even have fun with Mind Bomb. Cards that require discards of your choice (Nature's Blessing, for instance) become powerful with Death Spark. Or, since it's a red card, use it with Surge of Strength. And if you want to embarrass your

opponent, kill him or her with Mishra's War Machine.

The best way to avoid getting Death Spark lost in your graveyard is to minimize the number of non-creature spells in your deck. The problem is still going to crop up, however. The best solution when this happens is Headstone ("Remove from the game target card in any graveyard. Draw a card at the beginning of the next turn's upkeep"). With four Death Sparks in your deck, it becomes marginally useful, since you can always use up Headstone mid-game for 1. Lodestone Bauble lets you remove lands. Clockwork Digger is also useful but only in games

where you're playing for the long haul, so it generally doesn't mix well with Death Spark. And for those who like Feldon's Cane, that's always a last-resort way to unstick a Death Spark too far down in your graveyard.

But you're certainly not going through all this effort just for Death Spark. As long as you're building up a large graveyard, work the theme and take advantage of it. Lhurgoyf is a top-notch choice. Also in green is Night Soil, but it doesn't work well with Lhurgoyf. The best overall choices are in black, though: Songs of the Damned gives enough black mana to power some very nasty X spells. Soulshriek can work into a brutal variation on Howl from Beyond. Balduvian Dead can add up to give you a significant attacking force for a turn, while Drudge Spell can offer multiple defenders. Eater of the Dead is one of the few ways to break the Stasis lock. Tombstone Stairwell goes without saying. Animate Dead and Dance of the Dead make excellent support cards as well. Just make sure you limit yourself and don't only have cards that work off of creatures' being in your graveyard with no room for creatures in your deck.

Much of Death Spark's magic involves the individual usages of the card in individual games. It's not a card that has a clear winning combination. It's far more a card that fits symbiotically with decks that already function well by sending creatures to the graveyard. ♣

Chris Page is a devoted recycler of cans, bottles, Death Sparks, and islands.

Know the Game

In most Magic games, you don't care about what order cards go into the graveyard, but if you're playing with Death Spark, you should review some of the obscure rules on this topic. Look at each scenario and decide what order the cards go in the graveyard.

SCENARIO: You cast Giant Growth on your Grizzly Bears. In response, your opponent casts Terror. You then cast Death Spark in response to that.

ANSWER: Spells only go into the graveyard upon resolution, which happens in last-in-first-out order. You choose the order in which the Bears and Giant Growth go in the graveyard. So Death Spark reaches the graveyard, then Grizzly Bears, and finally Giant Growth.

SCENARIO: Your opponent hits you with Hymn to Tourach.

ANSWER: Since the discards are specified to be at random, the order that the cards go in the graveyard is also random.

SCENARIO: You cast Ritual of the Machine, sacrificing your Bog Imp. In response to that, you cast Death Spark.

ANSWER: Costs to spells (like sacrifices) are paid immediately. So first the Bog Imp goes to the graveyard, then Death Spark, and then Ritual of the Machine. In this case, you would not be able to recycle Death Spark.

SCENARIO: Your opponent casts Jokulhaups.

ANSWER: Everything goes to the graveyard at once. Because no order is specified, each player chooses the order that their permanents go in.

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by Paul Peterson



Now you've done it.

You and Mr. Suitcase were once again playing **Magic**, and it seemed like he'd just beaten you for the eighty-fifth time in a row. You were shuffling your cute theme deck and trying to think of some changes to make to it

when it occurred to you that this deck got its butt kicked because it had quite a few "flavor" cards. You knew you could easily make the deck more powerful by swapping out some of them for better cards, but that would mean pulling out some of your favorites.

That got you thinking about all of the cards you liked, and you suddenly got very curious. What are Mr. Suitcase's favorite cards?

So you asked him.

Love Hurts

There are a variety of reasons to like a card, and not all of them are necessarily logical. Often people like cards because they're powerful, or maybe because they have a good theme (like goblins). Some people like certain cards just because they have cool art or flavor text. Mr. Suitcase likes cards for all of these reasons too. (Of course, he declined to admit that he likes any of the super-powerful "broken" cards like the Moxes and Black Lotus, but we know better—everyone loves those cards.) Mr. Suitcase *does* like cards that are versatile and powerful, but tends to be partial to those that get overlooked. Then again, he also has a mean streak and likes cards that are just plain frustrating for your opponent.

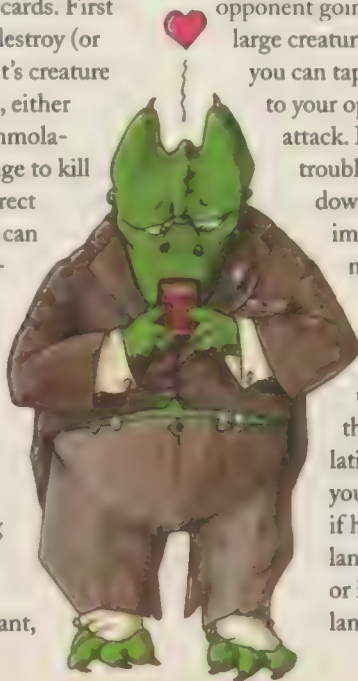
THE ALREADY GOOD

Let's start off with those cards that are versatile enough to be used in any deck of the appropriate color. Immolation (an enchant creature whose target gets +2/-2) and Blood Lust (an instant that gives a target creature +4/-4 until end of turn but doesn't bring its toughness below 1) are very flexible cards. First off, you can use them to destroy (or help destroy) an opponent's creature by reducing its toughness, either killing it outright with Immolation, or pulling it into range to kill with small creatures or direct damage. These two cards can also make your large creatures more powerful—at a cost to the creatures' toughness. In some cases, though, this cost isn't much of a disadvantage. For example, Ball Lightning already has a toughness of 1, so playing Blood Lust on it has no negative repercussions. Blood Lust is also an instant,

so if you're attacking with several creatures at once, choose to Blood Lust the one that doesn't get blocked. Once again, the negatives to its toughness won't matter, and you'll have increased your damage by 4.

Skull Catapult from *Ice Age* is an excellent card for counterpunching. By tapping the Catapult and one generic mana, you can sacrifice a creature as a fast effect to have the Catapult deal 2 damage to any target creature or player. Effectively, this reduces your opponent's willingness to destroy your creatures, since each time one of them gets targeted with Swords to Plowshares or Lightning Bolt, you just load it into the Catapult and hurl it at your opponent or a creature. And why block a rampager with more than one creature? If you block with one and toss another with the Catapult, the attacker won't get the rampage bonus. Chances are you'd lose the creature that you sacrificed anyway, if you block with it.

And we can't forget the king of artifacts: Icy Manipulator, an amazingly useful card in almost any deck, especially if you time its effect correctly. Is your opponent going to pummel you with a large creature? For one mana per turn, you can tap the creature in response to your opponent's declaration to attack. Is an artifact causing you trouble? Tap it and shut it down. Even if you have no immediate threats, you can manipulate one of your opponent's lands during his or her upkeep, thereby using the land up for anything other than fast effects. Manipulating land can also lock your opponent out of a color if he or she has only one land of the appropriate type, or it can deny access to a land with a special ability.



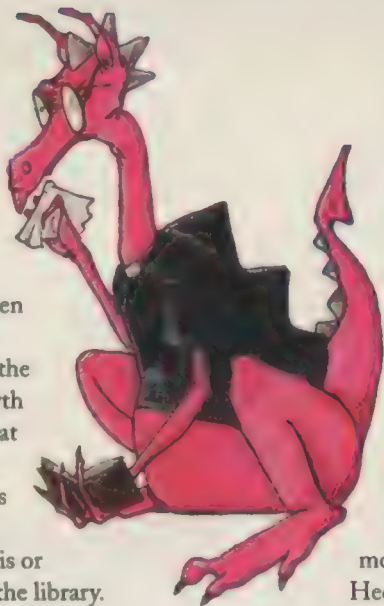


THE MISUNDERSTOOD BAD

Many cards in Magic often get overlooked, but Mr. Suitcase likes to root for the underdog. Stunted Growth from *Ice Age* is a truly great card. For two green and three generic mana, it lets you force your opponent to put three cards from his or her hand back on top of the library. This is a big advantage, as it gives you several turns to improve your choices by drawing new cards while your opponent is only drawing the cards that he or she already had. It also gives you a card advantage similar to Hymn to Tourach's.

Another sadly overlooked green card is the enchant artifact spell called Living Artifact. ("Put a vitality counter on Living Artifact for each damage dealt to you. **U**: During your upkeep, remove a vitality counter to gain 1 life.") It is incredibly cheap (with a casting cost of one green mana) for the huge effect it generates. While it's in play, it's much harder for your opponent to kill you with damage, since you can use Living Artifact to regain life. If you have any way at all to stalemate the game for a while, you will almost certainly get back all the life you lost as long as Living Artifact remains in play. All you need is an artifact to put it on—and your opponent may even help you out by conveniently playing one for you to enchant.

Foresight is a blue card from *Alliances* that many players should take a second look at. It allows you to go through your deck and remove from the game any three cards you wish. This effectively thins out any cards you no longer have a use for. Once you know what strategies your opponent is *not* playing, you can remove any of your cards that are geared solely to hosing those strategies, thus increasing your chances of drawing a card that you *do* want. Foresight is also a



cantrip (you draw another card during the next upkeep), so you won't have wasted a draw by getting Foresight in the first place. Later in the game, after you have sufficient land in play, you can use Foresight to strip out the extra land from your deck, once again increasing your chances to draw a more useful card.

Hecatomb is a fascinating enchantment, but it gets overlooked because it requires you to sacrifice four of your creatures when you bring it into play. But the benefit it provides is incredible. With Hecatomb in play, you can tap your swamps to have them each deal 1 damage to a target creature or player. It won't take long for this to kill your opponent, even if you only have a few swamps in play. The sacrifice cost is fairly easy to get around as well since there are so many cards, such as Sengir Autocrat, that rapidly generate 0/1 token creatures.

Lord of the Pit is one of Mr. Suitcase's all-time favorite creatures, but it deals 7 damage to you if you don't feed it a creature every turn, so people don't tend to play with it. You can include cards in your deck, however, that help ease this negative effect. Thrulls are a tasty treat for it to munch on, or you can not feed it anything and protect yourself from its wrath with a CoP: Black. And how can you not like a 7/7 flying, trampling creature? It's black, so you can't Terror it, and it's way too big to kill easily with creatures or direct damage. Even if it's blocked, it will deal enough damage each turn to swiftly kill your opponent.

THE REALLY FRUSTRATING AND UGLY

Sometimes it's fun to annoy your opponent. One of Mr. Suitcase's favorite cards of all time will sadly never see play

in a sanctioned Magic tournament. Shahrazad from *Arabian Nights* simply makes the game go entirely too long, yet it's a fantastic card. It suspends the current game and forces the players to play a subgame with only the cards left in their libraries. Whoever loses the subgame reenters the main game with half of his or her former life. Mr. Suitcase loves the swing effect of this card and the idea of "nested" games occurring, one inside the other. And there's nothing more satisfying than the frustrated look on your opponent's face when you Fork a Shahrazad to produce *two* Shahrazad effects. (Maybe Mr. Suitcase isn't such a nice guy.)

Divine Intervention from *Legends* is similarly frustrating. Two turns after the card enters play, the game becomes a draw, regardless of life totals. It's the ultimate "saving your behind" card. If you are way down, but you're sure that you can hold out for two more turns, plop this card down, and ta-da! You get a draw instead of a loss. If that sounds a little unfair to you, you know one reason why it was never reprinted and why it's banned in Classic (Type I).

FALLING IN LOVE

Of course, Mr. Suitcase says he loves many cards—that these represent only a smattering of his favorites.



So many Magic cards are unique, and there are so many different features that you can love.

That's one of the reasons why the game is so popular and also why people tend to build "fun" decks at times. Mr. Suitcase's favorite fun deck is a five-color montage that includes all the cards mentioned here—and that frequently gets kicked to the curb. ♠

Paul Peterson's favorite card is the ultimate-rare card called Mr. Suitcase's Bane: "♣: Mr. Suitcase's Bane deals 10 damage to you. This damage cannot be prevented or redirected. After you have taken this damage, burn your opponent's suitcase of cards. Opponent loses the game. Opponent now has the right to seek revenge."

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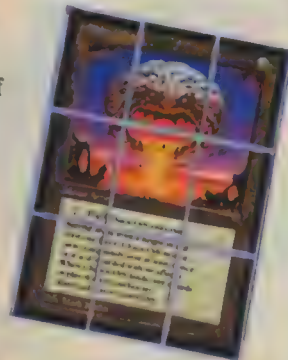
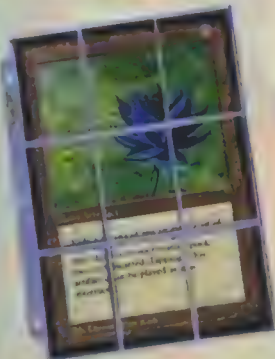
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by Beth "BethMo" Moursund



Stasis has been with us since the first days of Alpha. It's a funny card: it has one of the most powerful effects in the entire game but often hurts the user as much as it hurts the opponent.

Turbo-Stasis Decks

In the early days, Stasis decks were pretty much relegated to the category of "fun" decks. Then *Legends* gave us Time Elemental and Kismet, two cards that seemed tailored to complement Stasis, and Stasis decks became briefly popular. Most decks, though, still couldn't stand up to the rigors of tournament competition. Then came *Alliances* and the 1996 U.S. National Championships. Four competitors played variants of the same Howling Mine-powered, library-depletion Stasis deck: three of the four made it to the Top 16, and two made the semifinals. After the U.S. Nationals, the deck was plastered across the computer networks and published in several magazines, and soon swarms of players were trying versions of it and developing variants—or designing decks to beat it.

DECK FOUNDATIONS

All Stasis decks are "lock-down" decks; they attempt to get a combination of cards that lock the opponent down, preventing him or her from doing anything for the rest of the game. Stasis is great for this, as it eliminates the untap phase and makes almost every non-enchantment card single-use. Combine it with Kismet, and single-use becomes zero-use. Once your

opponent is locked down, you can win in a variety of ways: put out a card that damages your opponent every turn (such as Black Vise), play a creature that can attack without tapping (like Zephyr Falcon or Serra Angel), or simply run your opponent out of cards.

The problem is that all of the traditional mana sources are single-use as long as the Stasis is in play, and the lock lasts only as long as you can keep paying the upkeep of ♠ on the Stasis. If you finally run out of mana and have to let the Stasis expire, your opponent gets to untap first and has a whole turn to pound on you before you get an untap phase of your own. The Stasis deck needs a way to avoid this calamity.

TRADITIONAL STASIS

The original Stasis lock featured Birds of Paradise enchanted with Instill Energy. You tap the Birds each turn to pay the Stasis upkeep, then untap them again using the Instill Energy. This keeps both players locked. But since your deck is designed for these conditions, you have ways to win, and hopefully your opponent doesn't.

The Time Elemental version improved on this. With a Time Elemental in play, you can cast Stasis during each of your turns and then use the Time Elemental to return it to your hand at the end of your opponent's turn. Now your turns are normal, while your opponent never gets to untap. Unfortunately, this lovely state of affairs comes at a steep price: three blue and three generic mana per turn just to keep the lock going.

Both of these locks are fragile; each relies on a creature, and nearly every deck has some way to kill off a creature. So most of the deck, aside from the lock, consists of counterspells and other defensive spells to try to stay alive until you draw the cards needed for the combo, and to keep those cards in play once they're out.

TURBO-STASIS

Turbo-Stasis takes a whole different view of the world. Instead of creating a way to untap a mana source, it lets you draw so many cards that you can play a land every turn. The Howling Mines, along with a higher-than-usual land percentage, make this possible. They also provide the deck with its usual



"Hold it right there!" *Illustrator Fay Jones took time out to give us another look at the artwork of this unusual card.*

Turbo-Stasis Deck

Matthew Place worked his way to the semifinals of the 1996 Nationals with his Turbo-Stasis deck.

- 4 Arcane Denial
- 4 Boomerang
- 4 Force of Will
- 2 Recall
- 4 Stasis
- 1 Ivory Tower
- 2 Kismet
- 1 Land Tax
- 4 Lim-Dûl's Vault
- 3 Despot's Scepter
- 1 Feldon's Cane
- 4 Howling Mine
- 1 Zuran Orb
- 4 Adarkar Wastes
- 4 City of Brass
- 13 Island
- 4 Underground River

SIDEBOARD

- 2 Blue Elemental Blast
- 2 Hydroblast
- 3 Mana Short
- 2 Wall of Air
- 2 Disenchant
- 1 Kismet
- 1 Swords to Plowshares
- 1 Lodestone Bauble
- 1 Black Vise



way of winning: emptying the opponent's library. The Turbo-Stasis deck itself, of course, includes at least one Feldon's Cane to avoid suffering the same fate.

Often, though, you'll need to play the Stasis before drawing your Howling Mines, and a single Mine isn't quite enough to keep the mana flowing. Also, if you haven't yet locked your opponent down with a Kismet, you may need to spend some mana on countering a few of your opponent's spells. So the Turbo-Stasis deck, in true cluster-deck style, includes two types of fast effects that can be used to remove the Stasis at the end of the opponent's turn: Despot's Scepter and Boomerang. Despot's Scepter is simple and cheap; all it can do is destroy the Stasis. Ideally, you'll already have another Stasis in hand, or a way to go get one, at the time you use the Scepter to destroy the first one.

Boomerang, on the other hand, is multi-functional. If it's used on your Stasis, you can recast the Stasis on your own turn, keeping the lock going; furthermore, the card is one of the deck's primary defenses, able to remove anything dangerous that your opponent has managed to get into play. If your opponent managed to play a Feldon's Cane before the lock was established, you'll need a Boomerang for the Cane as well—that way you can force your opponent to use it too early to save himself or herself.

Recall allows you to reuse the Stasis cards that you blew away with the Despot's Scepter or to reuse any cards that your opponent managed to destroy or counter before getting locked down. Ivory Tower (since you'll always have a full hand once the Howling Mines get going) or Zuran Orb (since you've got lots of land) will help you survive any damage.

Finally, *Alliances* provided just the extra "oomph" needed to make this deck a real killer: Lim-Dûl's Vault, Arcane Denial, and Force of Will. The Vault lets you search your library to find the Stasis, Kismet, or Howling Mine that you so desperately need. At the same time, it lets you stack part of your library, ensuring that you'll either draw land or a key card when you need it. In this deck, Arcane Denial is superior to a regular Counterspell: half the casting cost can be generic (a minor benefit when playing with lots of pain lands), and, more important, it gives you an extra draw. Finally, the ultimate counterspell, Force of Will, protects you if you're tapped out so that you can safely establish your lock even in the early game.

A steady supply of blue mana is critical to the success of this deck, so all lands should be able to

produce blue. For the traces of white and black needed for Kismet and Lim-Dûl's Vault, this deck uses City of Brass, pain lands, and depletion lands. (The latter work extremely well with Stasis, since the depletion counter is removed during upkeep rather than during untap.)

Many Turbo-Stasis decks have no damage-dealing cards at all, relying solely on library depletion. Some, though, include Black Vise, Zephyr Falcon, or Yotian Soldier so that they're also capable of winning by damage. These are often sideboard cards, brought in for the second game. Other useful sideboard cards include Mana Short (for the cagey opponent who avoids tapping out) and, surprisingly, Twiddle. With a Stasis lock going, Twiddling an artifact or a non-tapping, attacking creature is almost as good as destroying it.

PLAYING AGAINST TURBO-STASIS

The main advantage Turbo-Stasis decks had at the U.S. Nationals was surprise. Even after word of the deck had spread, few players had anything in their sideboards to defend against it. Within the next few weeks, however, it had become the newest fad deck and was showing up at nearly every tournament. Being able to hold your own against Turbo-Stasis has now become a necessary part of deck design for all serious tournament players.

For such a specialized, combination-dependent deck, the Turbo-Stasis deck has stood up surprisingly well to the onslaught. Energy Flux is particularly annoying to the Stasis player; left in play, it destroys the deck. Power Leaking the Stasis seems almost as bad, while Boomeranging it (which the Stasis player will often want to do anyway) gives an easier escape. Winter Orb prevents the Stasis player from resetting her mana, forcing her to eventually drop the lock for at least a turn. Black Vise can kill a Stasis player in just a few turns unless opposed by an Ivory Tower. Non-tapping creatures can also eat away at the Stasis player's life points. And then there are the traditional approaches of brute force and land destruction: just hit the Stasis player fast and hard—before he can put enough land into play to start and maintain the lock—and blow up the land needed to pay for the Stasis upkeep.

Beth Moursund is a Magic netrep and longtime contributing writer to The Duelist.

If you'd like to see a specific deck type discussed, write to "Deck Deconstruction" c/o The Duelist, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057, or email us at <duelist@wizards.com>

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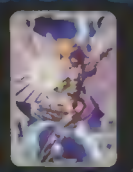
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by Tom Wylie



Crime and Punishment

The Magic Pro Tour has produced a new level of intensity for competitive players. As a result, rules and regulations need to be strictly enforced.

Occasionally some Magic players in events such as the Pro Tour or the qualifiers leading up to them have been surprised to find themselves forfeiting games or receiving warnings for innocently doing things that appear harmless but that turn out to carry stiff penalties. Such rules aren't established just to make life difficult for players but rather to protect the majority of players from the minority who are inclined to cheat. Informing players about the infractions and resulting penalties ahead of time helps reduce the surprise factor, but many players don't understand why they would be penalized in the first place.

While we can't catch every attempt at cheating, we can discourage people from trying in the first place. Standard methods of cheating such as drawing extra cards or sneaking cards into Sealed-Deck tournaments are all guarded against by imposing various penalties for different levels of cheating. Some of the cheating methods take advantage of incidents that are typically accidents ("Sorry, I didn't mean for those sleeves to stick together."), which is why players often find themselves warned or punished for such behavior. Penalties range from simple warnings to actual ejections, depending on how likely it is that an incident involves a cheater rather than a klutz and how likely it is that a possible cheater is testing his or her luck and hoping to be let off the hook.

It's generally believed that players who trip over these infractions are not actively trying to cheat, so very few are ejected from tournaments. Most infractions result in either a warning or a forfeited game. On the other hand, players never receive less than the minimum penalty, even when it's clear the infraction was accidental. This is because we assume that leniency leads to cheating; if a would-be cheater observes a player talking his or her way out of a penalty, the onlooker is likely to cheat, gambling on being able to talk his or her way out of punishment as well.

Of course, penalties can be increased when it becomes clear that a player is trying to cheat. Any player who receives the same warning twice in one event (or three times overall at the same event) is ejected, without exception. While most penalties are given for accidental infractions, it's not that hard, for example, to draw the correct number of cards, so repetitive behavior is assumed to be a sign of foul play. In fact, most players at an event will make it through without ever receiving a single warning or having to forfeit a game, so it's obviously not that difficult to play within the rules.

Infractions are also tracked from tournament to tournament, and consistent offenses will likely result in steeper penalties when the offense is repeated. For example, if a player participates in a series of

Playing with a deck that is illegal involves a minimum penalty of forfeiting a match, often with an upgrade to ejection from a tournament.



Sealed-Deck tournaments and frequently receives warnings for failing to register the contents of his or her deck properly, that player is likely to be banned from Sealed-Deck competitions for a specified period of time. Again, it's not that hard to write down the contents of a deck properly, so someone who consistently fails to do so is assumed to be either cheating or trying to get the actual recipients of his or her deck ejected for incorrect registration.

Let's now look at some examples of Magic crime and punishment.

MISREGISTERING THE DECK

There are two common ways of misregistering a deck: forgetting to write down some cards and writing down too many. When a player's actual play deck contents are found to be different from those he or she registered, that player typically must forfeit a game, as the chances of someone attempting to cheat by "accidentally" misregistering the deck are fairly high. If the player didn't write down enough cards, then he or she writes down just enough cards to bring his or her registered deck to the required minimum and removes the remainder from the deck. A player who writes down too many cards simply removes the remainder.

Occasionally, a player is found to be playing with a deck that is simply illegal—with one that has less than sixty cards, for example. This involves a minimum penalty of forfeiting a match, often with an upgrade to ejection from a tournament.

FAILURE TO PAY UPKEEP

Occasionally a player starts a turn with cards in play that require an upkeep cost but skips directly to drawing his or her card for the turn, without deciding whether or not to pay the upkeep costs. The rules of Magic allow (and in fact require) that the player put the card back, return to the upkeep phase, and decide

whether or not to pay the upkeep costs. Some players may take advantage of this by deliberately "forgetting" about their upkeep costs, and then looking at their card for that turn before deciding whether or not to pay it. This is an example of cheating that's very difficult to detect since players have a habit of speeding through their turns.

Both of the standard penalties, giving a warning and forfeiting a game, seem undesirable. Honestly forgetting about upkeep costs is easy to do, so forfeiting the player a game seems a bit harsh; if this were the punishment, players would actually forfeit a high percentage of games. And if the penalty

is simply a warning, then a cheater will simply wait until just the right time to use up his or her one warning for that tournament (waiting until the final round, for example). The tournament rules, therefore, alter the rules of Magic itself: if a player advances his or her turn past the upkeep phase, any nonmandatory upkeep costs are assumed not to be paid. This conveniently sidesteps the whole problem of worrying about whether the player is trying to cheat or not, as there is never a benefit to "forgetting" to pay an upkeep cost, so there is no reason to do so deliberately.

This approach of being presumed innocent obviously doesn't work if the player doesn't have a choice (if he or she forgets to put an Unstable Mutation counter on a creature, for example). In these cases, the situation is simply corrected, and the player is given a warning if the card draw for that turn might have influenced the progression of the upkeep phase in some way (for example, if the player might have decided to Disenchant an Unstable Mutation rather than let the creature go).

FORGETTING TO RETRIEVE CARDS

Occasionally, two players will finish a match, and one player's cards will have migrated to the other player's deck.

Maybe an artifact was stolen and not returned; maybe one player accidentally swept up the other player's creatures when he or she was gathering up the cards after the game. In any event, both players now have illegal decks since their decks no longer match what's recorded on their deck sheets. What's worse, whoever's deck is missing the cards is likely to be below the minimum deck size.

When the error is discovered, both players must forfeit their next game. If one player has already started a game, he or she forfeits the next game of the match. There are two reasons for penalizing both players. First, there's no way to know whether the card's migration was strictly accidental or if one player was trying to get the other one disqualified. Second, both players are responsible for making sure that their respective decks are restored properly after each match, so both players should have discovered the error, even though only one was guilty of committing it.

WITHDRAWING WITHOUT CHECKING IN

Occasionally a player decides to leave a tournament but fails to tell the tournament officials. This is extremely disruptive because it wreaks havoc with the pairings, especially if the player who withdrew is in the middle of the standings rather than at the bottom. Also, the player paired against the withdrawn player automatically wins that match, and the results of the tournament and the DCI rankings are now tainted. Furthermore, it's simple to avoid this disruption since the player only has to tell tournament officials that he or she is leaving.

Therefore, if a player decides to leave a Pro Tour event or qualifier without informing an official, that player is banned from the next equivalent tournament. For a Pro Tour event, this means the next stop on the Pro Tour; for a qualifier, this means the next qualifying tournament in the same area. ♣

Contrary to rumors, Tom Wylie has not considered adding "caning" to the ever-growing list of Magic penalties (although he is a big proponent of "pistols at dawn" as a final tiebreaker).



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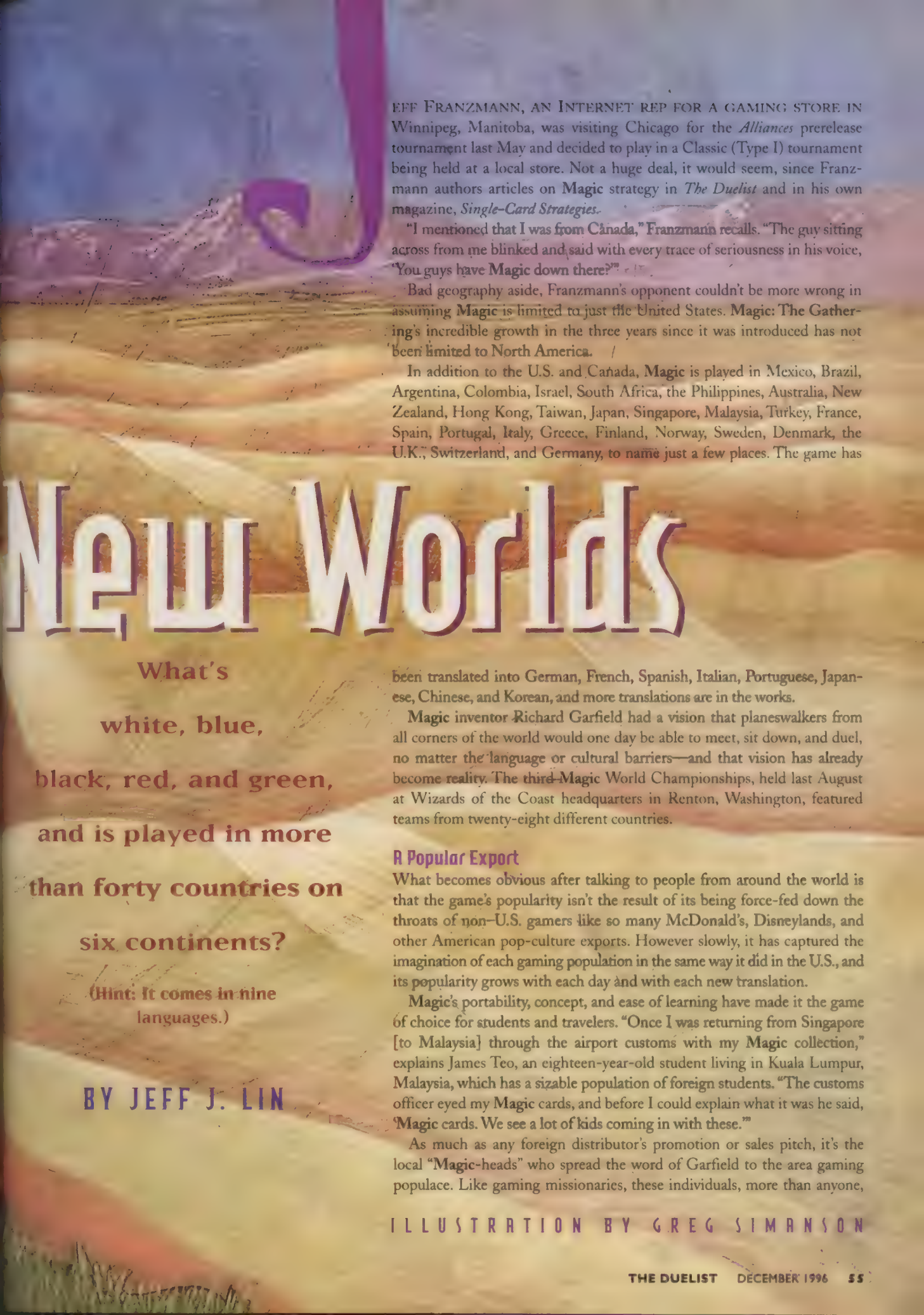


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Opening



EFF FRANZMANN, AN INTERNET REP FOR A GAMING STORE IN Winnipeg, Manitoba, was visiting Chicago for the *Alliances* prerelease tournament last May and decided to play in a Classic (Type I) tournament being held at a local store. Not a huge deal, it would seem, since Franzmann authors articles on Magic strategy in *The Duelist* and in his own magazine, *Single-Card Strategies*.

"I mentioned that I was from Canada," Franzmann recalls. "The guy sitting across from me blinked and said with every trace of seriousness in his voice, 'You guys have Magic down there?'"

Bad geography aside, Franzmann's opponent couldn't be more wrong in assuming Magic is limited to just the United States. Magic: The Gathering's incredible growth in the three years since it was introduced has not been limited to North America.

In addition to the U.S. and Canada, Magic is played in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Israel, South Africa, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Turkey, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the U.K., Switzerland, and Germany, to name just a few places. The game has

New Worlds

What's

white, blue,

black, red, and green,

and is played in more

than forty countries on

six continents?

(Hint: It comes in nine languages.)

BY JEFF J. LIN

been translated into German, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Japanese, Chinese, and Korean, and more translations are in the works.

Magic inventor Richard Garfield had a vision that planeswalkers from all corners of the world would one day be able to meet, sit down, and duel, no matter the language or cultural barriers—and that vision has already become reality. The third Magic World Championships, held last August at Wizards of the Coast headquarters in Renton, Washington, featured teams from twenty-eight different countries.

A Popular Export

What becomes obvious after talking to people from around the world is that the game's popularity isn't the result of its being force-fed down the throats of non-U.S. gamers like so many McDonald's, Disneylands, and other American pop-culture exports. However slowly, it has captured the imagination of each gaming population in the same way it did in the U.S., and its popularity grows with each day and with each new translation.

Magic's portability, concept, and ease of learning have made it the game of choice for students and travelers. "Once I was returning from Singapore [to Malaysia] through the airport customs with my Magic collection," explains James Teo, an eighteen-year-old student living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which has a sizable population of foreign students. "The customs officer eyed my Magic cards, and before I could explain what it was he said, 'Magic cards. We see a lot of kids coming in with these.'"

As much as any foreign distributor's promotion or sales pitch, it's the local "Magic-heads" who spread the word of Garfield to the area gaming populace. Like gaming missionaries, these individuals, more than anyone,

ILLUSTRATION BY GREG SIMANSON

are responsible for turning other players on to the game, in countries across the world.

They're people like Hasan Colakoglu, a twenty-five-year-old sales and marketing manager for SATKO Telecom. Colakoglu runs a Magic league for over eighty players as well as tournaments in Istanbul, Turkey. A longtime roleplaying gamer and board gamer, Colakoglu encountered Magic at GenCon in 1994 and brought back two *Revised* starter decks to play with friends. The number of cards grew: "Each time somebody went abroad they would bring new packs," he remembers. Things grew so that Colakoglu and a friend who owned a local comics store started importing the game, and "the number of players exploded." Colakoglu's next goal is to get his events sanctioned by the Duelists' Convocation International (DCI).

Even for the most enthusiastic players, though, there are obstacles to Magic's growth in certain areas of the world. Take Israel, for instance. "Generally, the [Magic] scene in Israel sucks," writes Ofer Sapir, a player who lives in Kfar Saba. "We have [DCI-] sanctioned tourneys once a year." Contrast this with Los Angeles, where players can find at least one DCI-sanctioned tournament every week.

Availability of the cards and events is a determining factor—and then there's the language barrier. "Magic was popular as soon as it came to France," says Chris Mouchel, a twenty-four-year-old student living in Caen, France, "but only people speaking English were playing [age sixteen and older]. The real explosion came with the first French edition."

There's also the simple fact of world economics. "Because of the exchange rate and high import prices, it's just not possible for a lot of people to buy a lot of cards and play really aggressively," says Donovan Cowie, a twenty-two-year-old student living in Durban, South Africa. Says Colakoglu: "Nobody plays for ante [in Istanbul]. The decks are sold a little bit

Magic inventor Richard Garfield had a vision that planeswalkers from all corners of the world would one day be able to meet, sit down, and duel, no matter the language or cultural barriers. Today that vision is a reality.

more expensively than in the U.S., and in Turkey most people do not earn as much, so every player values his or her cards."

Playing Styles

For the most part, everyone unanimously follows the DCI floor rules and formats: "Type I" and "Type II" are instantly recognizable phrases wherever you go. House rules and customs may vary, however. For instance, in Manila, Philippines, players' life totals max out at 40 ("Forget the infinite life combos!" writes Dean Alfaro). Tournaments in Sydney, Australia, are run with *Ice Age's* Vexing Arcanix added to the Restricted List.

Most of the rules are determined by area players, but sometimes the game must follow the letter of the law. "The most important house rule in Brazil in my opinion is the lack of games for ante," says Nelson Luiz Weissman, a twenty-eight-year-old software engineer in Rio de Janeiro. In fact, ante is not

mentioned in the Portuguese version of the rulebook, and all ante cards were omitted from the Portuguese translation of *Fourth Edition*.

The most popular format worldwide seems to be Standard (Type II), due to card (and translation) availability. This isn't to say that a traveler can't find a Classic (Type I) game if he or she looks. Because of card availability, Classic opponents are harder to find, but there will probably be several eager opponents anywhere you go. "Nineteen ninety-four and 1995 were our [Classic] years," says Alfaro, a twenty-eight-year-old resident of Manila, Philippines, and the Philippine Classic champion. "But due to the focus of the DCI/WotC on [Standard], we all geared toward that format. It was hard at first, since we were used to the power cards.... In fact, when *Ice Age* came out we unanimously sneered at the plain lands in favor of the duals and all but gave them away. Now we regret it."

In those areas that programs like the

DCI and the newly launched Arena League haven't reached (and probably won't for some time), local organizers have created their own leagues and systems to fill the void.

"Adelaide [Australia] has the Tactics Grand Prix series," reports David Low, a native of Adelaide currently living in Japan. Started in 1995, the series combines a mixture of tournament styles (Classic, Standard, no-sideboard, Highlander, Sealed-Deck, etc.) over the course of the year, and players accumulate points throughout the season based on their finishes in the different events.

"We're currently in the process of compiling a national register of Magic players, complete with (unofficial) DCI ratings," says Marcus Schakowski, who runs Future Fantasy, a shop in Johannesburg, South Africa. "So when the day comes that a South African Duelists' Convocation is set up, we can jump right in."

You Want a What?

It goes without saying that cards are valued differently in different countries, but, on the whole, older, out-of-print cards are pretty much prized anywhere you go. When it comes to in-print cards, whatever cards are key to the popular deck fad are valued more—and deck trends are surprisingly the same globally, probably due to communications technologies like the Internet.

Europe and the U.S. seem to value the same cards equally—again, thanks to the Internet. The price guide of choice seems to be *Scrye*, though a handful of countries rely more heavily on *InQuest*. And in some places, it's much harder to get cards from sets earlier than *Revised*.

"Magic was not available in Brazil at the time of *Unlimited*, it's been said recently that only three Black Lotuses exist in Brazil," says Weissman. "I really doubt that number, but it gives you a feeling of how rare these cards actually are down here. Buying a Lotus in Brazil is next to impossible since stores don't sell singles and many people still don't have Internet access."

Now Where?

The age-old question "Where do you want to play?" has different answers in different cities and countries. Where possible, players gather in shops like Faraos

Cigarer in Copenhagen, Denmark, or Neutral Ground in New York City, both of which have large open tables and playing areas designated specifically for gaming. But these types of places are luxuries; shops are often too crowded for players to gather or not conveniently located.

In Toronto, the big spot to play is the 401 Convenience, a store that's been taken over by **Magic** players and turned into the one of the town's big **Magic** hangouts. In San Francisco, one of the big weekly gatherings and tournaments takes place at a Carl's Jr., a fast-food hamburger joint.

In Paris, crowds have gotten so big outside L'Oeuf Cube, the big **Magic** hangout, that the owner has had to buy side ropes to make a path to access the

shop. In Singapore you'll find people playing outside the Bishan MRT (a train station) and at the local McDonald's.

One popular alternative, especially in Europe, seems to be pubs and bars. "In France you can go in a bar when you are sixteen and drink alcohol at eighteen," says Mouchel. "As a general rule the bars where you can find players aren't far off the hobby shops. And it's usually easier to ask the owner of the shop where the players go.... He often knows." Adds Peter Keyngnaert, a twenty-four-year-old student in Leuven, Belgium, "For some good tourney players and/or trading, the Planche [a pub] is a must."

Social Perceptions of the Game

Though in many European countries

(and in most of the U.S.) games like **Magic** are, no big deal, the rest of society's reaction to a popular game that uses a fantasy theme varies wildly.

"Australia tends to be rather leisure-oriented—generally outside activities, but there's a lot of gaming background," says Low. "It would be rare to find a household without a 'game cupboard,' for example. Family games in particular are big sellers. So **Magic** is really nothing strange; it's just another game to most people."

But in stricter cultures with a strongly religious population, the reactions are not as favorable. "Because we [the Philippines] are a predominantly Catholic country, Catholic schools have all but banned **Magic** from their premises," reports

Tips for Taking Magic on the Road

Taking a few weeks off abroad? Feel like mixing with some of the locals? Pack your **Magic** decks, and, chances are, if you're visiting a city with a sizable English-speaking population, you'll be able to find a game. And what better way to familiarize yourself with the people and customs of your new locale than by making friends with some of the local players?

Finding the local hot spot for **Magic**, though, can be trickier than it sounds. Try to do some research and make contacts before you go; it will save you valuable time. "It took me four hours and visiting six shops to find the regular playing pub," recalls Hans Goris, a thirty-five-year-old from Holland, explaining his hunt for a **Magic** game during a trip to London, "to discover they played there only on Tuesday nights."

One useful way of finding potential play groups is over the Internet, either on the Usenet or Internet Relay Chat. Messages appear regularly on the Usenet groups [rec.games.trading-cards.magic.misc](#) and [rec.games.trading-cards.magic.strategy](#) from players wondering where they could find a game in a certain area. The response rate is usually pretty high.

"Having a local contact is important," says David Low, an Australian currently living in Kyoto, Japan. "I spent over a month looking for someone who played here to introduce me to the local scene [which can appear hidden]. But one contact led to



another, and another, and once you've been introduced things tend to snowball."

And then there's the phone book. "If I'm looking for somewhere to play when I travel I usually just check out a local gaming store," says Jeff Franzmann of Winnipeg, Canada. "They either have a place set up or can direct me to a place that has space."

Once you do find a game it helps to make an effort to fit in. Be aware of cultural values if they differ.

"Being socially acceptable is far, far more important than having cards or life counters," says Low of his experiences in Japan. "Politeness is important, as is a willingness to take the first gentle step.. Show that you're willing to join in the culture."

"Try not to touch your opponents' cards," advises James Teo of players who may visit Singapore. "We seldom cut each other's decks, and it is usually considered an accusation of deck stacking if you want to."

And make sure to obey the local customs. "If you are playing in a pub, as many groups here do, ensure you buy a few drinks or the landlords get stropky," warns Jan McManus, a regular **Magic** player in London.

And one last thing: if you're traveling to a country where English isn't the predominant language, try to use cards with the art from the basic set. Says Nelson Luiz Waissman, who lives in Rio de Janeiro, "We want to be able to recognize a card no matter what language it's written in." —J.L.L.

Alfar. "This is due to the frenzy in which the kids there play (to the detriment of their schoolwork) as well as certain images. Demonic Tutor may be hard to find, but Demonic Consultation is still around. It may not have a demon illustrated, but the very name evokes... reactions." Alfar adds, "I am doing my part to dissuade such a narrow view, but it's really a challenge."

Many schools in Singapore have banned the game completely on their premises. "The religious consider it a 'cult game,'" says Walter Theseira, an eighteen-year-old living there. "Mission schools

around here, for example, will burn decks if they catch students with them."

"In Singapore Magic is seen as a game of the delinquents, people who have nothing better to do with their lives," says Teo. "If you play Magic you are automatically associated with other card games, like gin rummy and poker, which have bad PR on the side of gambling. And knowing how the Singapore system works, that is not too good."

But the imagery of the game can cause problems anywhere, not just in those countries. "I remember playing in an *Ice Age Sealed-Deck* tournament in Toronto,"

says John Robertson, an engineer for IBM in Toronto. "A woman came in with her family, and as she waited for the kids to pick out some candy she looked at what I was playing, interested in the game. I can still remember what she said: 'Well, this looks interesting, some sort of card game! This looks like fun! What have we here? A... Flow of Muggots. Oh my. Come on kids, we're going!'"

Common Ground

One of the great things about playing Magic is that it provides something in common for two strangers, no matter how

Spanning the Globe in 60 Cards

The list below was compiled while doing interviews and queries for the accompanying article and should in no way by any stretch of the imagination be construed as a complete listing of all the places where you can find Magic games and tournaments taking place. Rather, it's provided to illustrate the breadth of how far Magic: The Gathering has spread worldwide. There are far, far more cities than those listed, and several of the larger, established ones (especially in Europe) are missing, but this should still give you some scope of the phenomenon we call Magic. — J.J.L.

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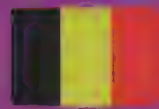
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different in background, to talk about.

"I was in London traveling on the day that *Alliances* was released," remembers Michael Powell, who lives in Baltimore, Maryland. "I immediately went to a Virgin Megastore [a chain of record shops] to pick up some packs. I struck up a conversation with a Londoner also picking up packs, and we ended up doing a number of trades right in the store."

"Magic is a very easy way to get to know others, since you can just state that you're into Magic too and ask if they want to play a couple games," says Keyngnaert, who regularly travels throughout Europe

to attend computer demo parties. "At some parties, even Magic tourneys are arranged, so it's quite popular with the demo scene."

In general, Magic players are a friendly and accommodating lot. "We have people who would offer accommodations to a few people for a few days, too," offers Mark Ogden, who lives in Johannesburg, South Africa.

As for Franzmann, after setting his opponent straight as to where Canada is located and that, yes, they have Magic in Canada, the two ended up getting along pretty well. "It was a pretty amusing situa-

tion in retrospect, because he fit the 'jock' mold rather well, while I'm about as goth as they come when I want to be. And here we were playing a game in the middle of a store surrounded by teenagers and computer programmers.

"We talked for quite some time about the differences in playing styles... We also spent some time talking about Chicago in general, since neither of us knew the place, and we ended up hanging out together for a while during the pre-release tournament the next day."

Magic around the world—bridging cultural gaps wherever it's played. ♣



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Taking Carp Advantage

Moving Past the Luck o



by **B**Rian Weiss**M**an

In the last year or so, “card advantage” has been the catch phrase for Magic players. But why is it so important, and what can you do to get it? Understanding how card advantage works—the different types of card-advantage cards and the various, sometimes less obvious ways, that card advantage can be achieved—can go a long way toward improving your play strategy.

Let’s assume for starters that in a normal game under normal circumstances the most important move you make is drawing a card. Each card drawn grants you new resources in the form of lands and spells, as well as new ways of dealing with what your opponent has put into play. With this assumption in mind, you can also equate every card destroyed or drawn beyond that one per turn with an extra turn taken, at least where draw phase is concerned. Many players recognize the restricted spell Time Walk as one of the most powerful cards in Magic, but comparatively few realize that players use the spell the majority of

Unless Virginia is aided by a similarly powerful card like Jayemdae Tome or Land Tax, she has virtually no way to combat the advantage that Rutger has gained and will almost surely lose. Time and time again, card drawing has proven to be a solid, almost risk-free path to victory, so much so that many players live by the statement “If you draw more cards than your opponent, you will just win.”

Classy Cards

If you really want to understand how card advantage works, it’s helpful to categorize the cards that give advantage into nice, neat classes for easy reference.

to Plowshares that removes a creature with an instant or enchantment invested in it gains card advantage. A Lightning Bolt that kills a Hypnotic Specter generated by a Dark Ritual garners the same. You can also use these cards to ensure the survival of a more powerful card-advantage card if, for example, you use a Swords to Plowshares to destroy your opponent’s Scavenger Folk, which

the Draw

the time to accomplish little more than what can be accomplished with a Jalum Tome: a few mana are spent to get that very important extra card.

Say that Rutger is playing a standard Necropotence deck and is drawing lots of cards, while Virginia is using a red/white defensive deck. Rutger’s deck is based around card advantage, employing cards like Hymn to Tourach, Hypnotic Specter, Nevinyrral’s Disk, and Necropotence. Virginia’s deck, on the other hand, is filled with direct damage, creatures, Swords to Plowshares, and Disenchants.

The early game seems fairly balanced. Rutger plays several creature and artifact threats, and Virginia destroys them. Both players’ hands gradually shrink in size as they increase their mana bases and play out their spells. Then, suddenly, Rutger casts his key spell, Necropotence. In one turn, the Necro player draws six extra cards, the equivalent of six extra turns, and quickly overruns Virginia’s depleted defenses with the three creatures he has drawn.

This categorization system was originally conceived by my “tech” duo of friends, John Immordino, who at one time was ranked number one in the DCI, and Jim Weaver.

The most basic cards in Magic, the *single-card-effect* cards are the least obviously tied to card advantage. This class of cards inherently interacts on a one-to-one basis with other cards in the game: you can use one spell to eliminate one of your opponent’s cards. For example, when you Counterspell your opponent’s Shivan Dragon, you are essentially trading one card (your Counterspell) for one of your opponent’s (the Shivan Dragon). Spells like Counterspell, Swords to Plowshares, Terror, Lightning Bolt, and Desert Twister are all examples of cards in this class.

At face value, all of these single-card-effect cards appear to be the antithesis of what one would assume to be card advantage, since by nature they can never affect more than a single target. Yet in the right situation, you can use them to gain card advantage. A Swords



Thanks to the power of the Jayemdae Tome, I was able to weather the storm until the land finally showed up.

would have been a threat to your yet-to-be-cast Jayemdae Tome. Efficiency is what keeps these single-card effects in competitive decks.

The second class, the *multicard-effect cards*, have a one-time use that can let you draw or destroy more than a single card. These cards are undeniably powerful forces and have long been the backbone of competitive decks in Classic (Type I) and Standard (Type II) formats. Examples of these cards include

Armageddon, Ancestral Recall, Hymn to Tourach, Primitive Justice, and Hurricane. Since they have larger, more powerful effects, multicard-effects cards generally have higher casting costs than their single-card counterparts. Using a multicard effect to eliminate fewer than two of your opponent's cards tends to be an inefficient use of a higher-casting-cost card. For example, Lightning Bolt is a single-card effect that inflicts 3 damage for one mana; Flare is a multicard effect that deals 1 damage for three mana, so it would be a waste of resources to use Flare on only one target.

The third class of card-advantage cards is *permanent multicard-effects* cards; these cards give card advantage continuously over time. Many cards in this permanent class are artifacts like Disrupting Scepter. Once it's in play, you can use Disrupting Scepter repeatedly to make your opponent discard a card. Other examples of these permanents include Browse, The Abyss, Orcish Artillery, and Drop of Honey. The large majority of creatures in *Magic* are also classified as permanent multicard effects since they have the ability to deal continuous damage. Your opponent may block your creature with one of his or hers, and each time your creature survives but your opponent's dies, you've gained card advantage. This class of cards operates somewhat inconspicuously, often granting no advantage when cast but facilitating dramatic, often game-winning dominance over time.

The final class of cards in *Magic*, the *rule-bending* cards, are potentially the most powerful and certainly the least straightforward. Rule-bending cards are almost exclusively enchantments or artifacts; they do little by themselves, but under certain circumstances they can generate unrivaled card advantage by first bending the rules of the game so that you can turn that bending to your favor. Mana Flare is an example of a rule-bending card, since it causes all mana-producing land to produce an extra mana. By itself, that does not give you card advantage. But if you combine it with Book of Rass, you're able to pay 1 and 2 life rather than 3 and 2 life to draw a card.

These cards also tend to create locks, which are the ultimate in card advantage,

since they render the remainder of the opponent's draw phases ineffective. The most obvious example of this is with Stasis, which denies players an untap phase. If your opponent can't untap mana but you have a way of getting around that problem, then you've gained card advantage since your opponent will have limited mana sources. Combined

effective than others, depending on the situation.

Drawing extra cards is effective in and of itself. Remember Rutger and Virginia? Rutger was able to win because he had three new creatures in his hand, while Virginia's hand resource was depleted. With the exception of a few restricted blue spells like Ancestral

A Jokuhaups that annihilates three times as many of your opponent's permanents as it does yours can give you a card advantage equal to that provided by the most powerful restricted sorcery such as Braingeyser.



with Kismet, which makes all of your opponent's lands, creatures, and artifacts come into play tapped, you've created an almost unstoppable lock, keeping your opponent from using any new cards put in play. Other examples from this subtle category include Time Elemental, Fastbond, Nether Void, Winter Orb, Blood Moon, Island Sanctuary, and Arboria.

Getting the Right Mode

So now you know why card advantage is indeed an advantage, and you know the different classes of cards that grant card advantage. You know which ones are most effective in the long run, as well as when in the game you can cast them to get the most advantage. Now let's look at *why* they're effective by exploring the modes through which they accomplish card advantage. You can gain card advantage through *card drawing*, *card destruction*, or *card nullification*, and though all of these are ways to achieve card advantage, some means are more

Recall, Time Walk, and Braingeyser, a majority of the cards that gain card advantage through drawing are permanents that have multicard effects. The most commonly used of these (spells like Necropotence and Land Tax) have served as the fundamental card-drawing engines behind a number of competitive tournament decks. If you watch decks that are built around these cards in action, it's very easy to see why card advantage is so important.

Card destruction also grants card advantage if you eliminate more of your opponent's cards than you give up. For example, casting a Hymn to Tourach to rid your opponent of two cards in hand grants card advantage. Also, if you destroy your opponent's Bog Imp that's enchanted with Unholy Strength using a single Swords to Plowshares, you've similarly gained card advantage through card destruction.

So what's more effective: card drawing or card destruction? Whether it is cards in hand or cards in play that are being destroyed *en masse*, there is no denying that card advantage gained through this second technique is powerful indeed.

One of the ways to approach the argument (suggested to me by my friend Matt Place, one of the quarterfinalists at the 1996 World Championships) is to look at it from the standpoint of ratios. Say that Rutger has seven cards in hand and Virginia has the same. After drawing up to eight, Rutger, the drawing aficionado, casts Braingeyser for five extra cards. This increases his hand size to nearly twice that of his opponent

(171%), a substantial advantage. Rutger plays one or two cards and then discards back down to seven. On the next turn, Virginia draws and casts *Mind Twist*, forcing Rutger to discard five cards. After the random discard takes place, Virginia, despite having manipulated the same number of cards as Rutger did on the previous turn, now has a hand size that is over three times larger than Rutger's (350%)! This example compares the power of card drawing and card destruction, and partially explains the relative restricted and banned status of *Braingeyser* and *Mind Twist*.

Furthermore, a destruction-based strategy can operate outside of cards in hand, unlike a drawing-based strategy. A *Jokulhaups* that annihilates three times as many of your opponent's permanents as it does yours can give you a card advantage equal to that provided by the most powerful restricted sorcery such as *Braingeyser*. Even casting a single destructive multicard effect like *Dust* or *Fumarole* can swing a game heavily in your favor.

Certainly, the decks that win most consistently embody both card-drawing and card-destruction strategies. The two most dominant deck types in Standard (Type II) over the last six months or so, monoblack *Necro* decks and white/green *Armageddon* decks, are studies in card advantage, and both gain that advantage through nearly equal parts card drawing and card destruction.

Finally, card nullification is the most powerful and least straightforward of the card-advantage modes. When you nullify a card you are making it unusable, either because your opponent cannot cast it or because you've made it useless for him or her to cast it. *Kismet*'s effect on a *Ball Lightning* is a great example of card nullification. Also, you can create card nullification by playing with cards like *Autumn Willow* or *Deadly Insect* that can't be targeted. Your opponent may have to hold a *Terror* in his or her hand for a long time if there's nothing to cast it on.

Cards that work on card nullification are generally so powerful that they can seal up a game completely by themselves, representing the ultimate in card advantage. For example, if you cast *Blood Moon* against an opponent who is play-

ing with all nonbasic lands, you could conceivably seal up a game on the first turn, since your opponent's land sources would only produce red mana. Or you could take out a key mana source by casting *Stone Rain* or *Strip Mine*, thus nullifying your opponent's next six draw phases, all of which are spent drawing spells that can't be cast. The one disadvantage to the strategy of card nullification (and the primary reason for its general lack of popularity in the tournament circuit) is its dependency on lock cards, which are by nature weak and

players generally have a solid understanding of card advantage.

I was playing against my friend Yan and had what I thought was a good draw: two *Mana Crypts* ("During your upkeep, flip a coin. Opponent calls heads or tails while coin is in the air. If flip ends up in opponent's favor, *Mana Crypt* deals 3 damage to you; ☉: Add two colorless mana to your mana pool.") and a *Jayemdae Tome*, and when he couldn't deal with the artifact threat, I figured I had the game sealed up. Yan's deck employed a lot of land destruction, and by the fourth turn in the game he had destroyed every land I had in play and had cast a *Nether Void* as well.

Well, I quickly discovered that my stellar draw wasn't quite as good as I thought, as I failed to draw a single land through the next twelve draw phases. Under normal circumstances, no land for twenty-four draws (counting the *Jayemdae Tome*) would have meant certain death, but thanks to the power of the single *Jayemdae Tome*, I was able to weather the storm until the land finally



Effect on a *Ball Lightning* is a
complete example of card nullification.
When combined with *Stasis*, it can
shut down any deck permanently.

combo-oriented. When combined with *Stasis*, *Kismet* can shut down any deck permanently; alone, it's merely annoying.


Luck versus Skill

So why does card advantage win? Besides the obvious reasons (more options, better ratios, etc.), the answer lies in a general property of *Magic* as a game. As much as optimists tend to ignore it, *Magic* is a game in which luck is often the deciding factor. When two players of relatively equal skill pair up with competent decks, the winner will almost always be the person with the luckier draw. But skill in deck building and card play can compensate for some degree of luck, and that skill often comes in the form of card advantage. Good players know how to take advantage of having good luck or of their opponent's having bad luck, and good

showed up. In a game where I discarded twenty-four consecutive cards, I wound up being the winner, thanks entirely to the choices granted to me by the power of card advantage.

Whatever style you wish to play, be it fast and frenzied or slow and tactical, the surest way to defeat your opponent consistently is by dominating him or her in the war of card advantage. Whatever style you play, though, can and should incorporate a mix of all classes of *Magic* cards, whether single-card effects or lock cards, card drawing or card nullification. Once you've got the right mix, you'll be able to focus on flawless play and prudent drawing. ✱

Brian Weissman is a student at the University of California at Santa Barbara and is an authority on Constructed Classic (Type I) and Standard (Type II) play.



On the battlefield of trading card games, how do you want to be armed? This November, Wizards of the Coast gives you a new choice: you can command a thirty-foot-tall mechanized soldier—a BattleMech, the humanoid war machine of the thirty-first century that comes armed to the teeth with lasers, missiles, and enough firepower to give the heavens pause. Or you can command a flying white horse with the dubious timidity “banding.” Is this war or a group hug? That’s what we thought.

BattleTech:
**'Meching
It Happen**

by Michael G. Ryan



BattleTech, based on the popular board game from FASA Corporation, is Wizards of the Coast's fourth trading card game, and it's by far the loudest. No blood pools here—no hidden agendas, no faeries, no elves, and absolutely no "Twonky." You're in charge of a field of heavily armed 'Mechs, and there's only one thing on your mind: obliterate your enemy's army and resources. From your Command Post, you send your troops out on missions to face the big guns your opponent has managed to get in place. Patrolling 'Mechs move to intercept your aggressors; on the distant horizon, you can see the enemy stockpile, the primary goal of your attacks. Lasers criss-cross the sky as your 'Mechs engage your opponent's guards, and the roar of missiles launching is deafening, even to the pilots deep inside your 'Mechs. Shards of armor fly; 'Mech structures crumble under the thunderous barrage. It's not the smell of napalm in the morning, but it's the next best thing to being there, and both FASA and Wizards of the Coast think this is one battle you'll want to tech advantage of.

Teching Off

BattleTech is the final result of a joint effort from Wizards of the Coast and FASA that began in August of 1994. During the last two years, designers and developers at both WotC (Richard Garfield, Glenn Elliott, James Ernest) and FASA (Bryan Nystul in particular) considered a variety of different approaches to how 'Mechs in a trading card game might wage war. All the while, both companies strove to make the new game as strong and as faithful to the source material as possible. "FASA was incredible in helping to make sure that all aspects of the game and the game's atmosphere represented the BattleTech universe," says lead developer Charlie Catino. Bryan Nystul, BattleTech line developer for FASA, Sharon Turner Mulvihill, FASA's managing editor, and Jill Lucas, president of FASA, spearheaded this effort, providing feedback on every aspect of the product design—from rules to art to packaging to advertising. "Everyone at FASA worked hard to ensure that the overall flavor of combat in the BattleTech universe...survived the transition from board game to card game," Nystul says in his foreword to the game's rulebook. So fans of the original game are certain to feel right at home in the cockpit of the TCG.

"The people at FASA also helped give us a different look at the product," Catino adds. "The more people you can get to give you feedback on a game, the better your game is. This is especially true if those people are creative and have the experience in making games that the FASA people have."

BattleTech's Flavor Techs...er, Text

The BattleTech TCG takes you to a crucial moment in the universe's history: many hundreds of years ago, a group of soldiers left the Inner Sphere (the explored and colonized space where all humans live) for parts unknown. In the year 3050 (as detailed in the Blood of Kerensky trilogy by Michael Stackpole), the descendants of those soldiers—now called the Clans—return to the Inner Sphere, bent on conquest. The var-

ious Houses of the Inner Sphere have set aside their many years of civil war to join forces against these invaders, and you get to join in the battle. As a commander of a 'Mech force, you use your various resources and assets to construct 'Mechs, get them into your Patrol region, enhance them with additional weaponry and pilots, and send them on missions to annihilate your opponent's 'Mechs, Command Post, and Stockpile (draw pile). The object of the game is to completely run your opponent out of cards while guarding your own Stockpile to the bitter end.

To emphasize the dramatic story that provides the backdrop for the game, each card in BattleTech features brand-new flavor text commissioned just for the TCG. Michael Stackpole, noted author of numerous BattleTech books and other novels, contributed original work to the product...as did three lucky contest winners.

"We ran an online contest on WotC's Web Page," says Ron Richardson, BattleTech project manager at Wizards of the Coast, "soliciting flavor text submissions from our customers for three cards—and the winners had their entries used in the game. All in all, it was a big success; over a two-week period, we had over seven hundred entries."

Those entries came from all over the world—the United States, Germany, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada. In the end, three talented winners won the opportunity to see their work in print: David Trotti of Fullerton, California; Paul Barrett

Restocked Names

The BattleTech TCG required intensive research to make sure all card names, flavor text, and 'Mech abilities jibed with



the established BattleTech universe. But the designers and developers often gave cards placeholder names, to be replaced with more appropriate titles later in the development process. Can you match up the original "designer" name with the final one?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. What's That on My Shoe? | A. Forged Mission Orders |
| 2. Temporary Staging Ground | B. Risky Combat Jump |
| 3. Radar Baffling | C. Inexorable Advance |
| 4. Whoops! | D. 'Mech Hangar |
| 5. Boing! | E. Long Range Targeting System |
| 6. Boing POP! | F. Evasive Maneuver |
| 7. Duck! | G. Leap Before You Look |
| 8. Join the Fray | H. Deploy Reinforcements |

Answers: 1C, 2D, 3E, 4A, 5B, 6G, 7F, 8H

of Charlotte, North Carolina; and Glen Martin of Taylor, Texas. All three gentlemen will also receive credit in the rulebook, a box each of **BattleTech** starters and boosters, and a copy of the card bearing their flavor text autographed by designer Richard Garfield. So exactly who said war is hell?

Mission in Action

In the thirty-first century, there's not much of an opportunity to take your 'Mech for a test drive—but that's what WotC and FASA did with the **BattleTech** TCG, playtesting it repeatedly to get all the bugs out. Each company asked select players within their business to find the problem cards and rules.

"The playtest cycle went through two main phases," says developer Glenn Elliott. "From the first cycle, we learned that the game needed to play much more quickly, and that it would be best if we kept the number of details on the cards to a minimum." Elliott points out that



Building Character

The **BattleTech** universe brims with fascinating characters, from legendary military commanders to influential political leaders. Players familiar with the heroes and villains of FASA's sprawling saga of war in the 31st century will be gratified to find more than thirty prominent characters represented in the **BattleTech** TCG. Clan leaders like Ulric Kerensky and Inner Sphere heroes like Morgan Hasek Davion share the spotlight with mercenary commanders like Jaime Wolf, and each character's unique abilities have been carefully reviewed by FASA and WotC experts to ensure consistency with published characterizations.

Players are likely to find that some of their favorite characters have extremely useful abilities: Kai Allard-Liao, for instance, one of the greatest MechWarriors in the known universe, is an impressive combat pilot in the **BattleTech** TCG. Besides giving a player +3 initiative (a number used to determine which player goes first in battle) and +3 attack (a 'Mech's damage-dealing ability), Kai also prevents damage to every 'Mech that attacks in a group with him; furthermore, he allows his controller to draw a card anytime Kai attacks or blocks. If that card is a Mission card (a card that tends to affect battle conditions), Kai's controller gets to put it in his or her hand. And even if it's not, that player simply puts it on the bottom of his or her deck.

Trust, though, that the Clans have a few surprises up their sleeves as well. Or did you think that Phelan, "The Black Widow," and Vlad of the Wards would just sit this one out? —M.G.R.



during the original playtest cycle, some cards had on them as many as six different numbers, *plus* a casting cost, *plus* a text box!

The second phase of playtesting, says Elliott, was much more intense. "Cards and rules changed on a weekly, sometimes daily, basis," he notes. "Keeping the playtest internal allowed for this sort of revision process—outside playtesters would have been hopelessly out of date all of the time."

Cards and rules changed so often because playtest frequently revealed cards that were, in one way or another, too confusing or too powerful.

"All missiles and the Long Range Encounter—which became Missile Spotter—were continually too good," says Catino. "First, they were 'Incredibly Ba-Roken!' So we fixed them, making them only 'Ba-Roken!' We worked them over again, making them only 'Way Too Good,' and finally we fooled with them one more time...and there they were."

Other cards—like Pushing the Envelope and Good Shooting—had to be doctored as well, making them less overwhelming in weenie decks. By the time the designers and developers had finished, they had over 150 'Mechs and over 200 Command and Mission cards ready to roll into combat, each of them carefully scrutinized for playability.

"Ultimately," says game designer Richard Garfield, "we made many design decisions in favor of the aggressor. Hence, **BattleTech** rewards players who go on the offensive."

Deploy!

With over 350 cards available in 15-card boosters and 60-card starter decks, featuring such noted artists as Liz Danforth, Tom Wänerstrand, and Randy Asplund Faith, and designed by Wizards of the Coast art director Roger Coad, **BattleTech** will undoubtedly hit the ground running. To support the new game, Wizards of the Coast will construct life-size, fully functional 'Mechs and, under the tutelage of FASA strategists, will try to take over the world (narf!). Barring this, the company will continue to promote the game by providing various invitation-only **BattleTech** Basic Training sessions. At these sessions, retailers and distributors get a chance to learn the game well before its release, giving them a jump start on promoting and selling the product. WotC provides all participants with a step-by-step demonstration script to help them demo the game for their customers, and each retailer or distributor who enlists for Basic Training has a chance to win playtest cards autographed by Richard Garfield. So potential players may find that their local retailers are able to guide them through the basics of the game.

What else might the future hold for **BattleTech**? Garfield won't say, though he did provide an insightful clue to his personal design processes.

"When I needed to think of a card idea," he admits, "I thought of cabbage. In fact, most of my card ideas come from meditation on cabbage." ®

Best known for his Magic fiction, Michael G. Ryan is a freelance writer and an editor at Wizards of the Coast.

"But I spoke of my dread to none, knowing the peril of an untimely whisper, if it went astray. In all the long wars with the Dark Tower treason has ever been our greatest foe."

*—Gandalf the Grey, Speaking from Elrond's Porch in Rivendell
The Fellowship of the Ring*



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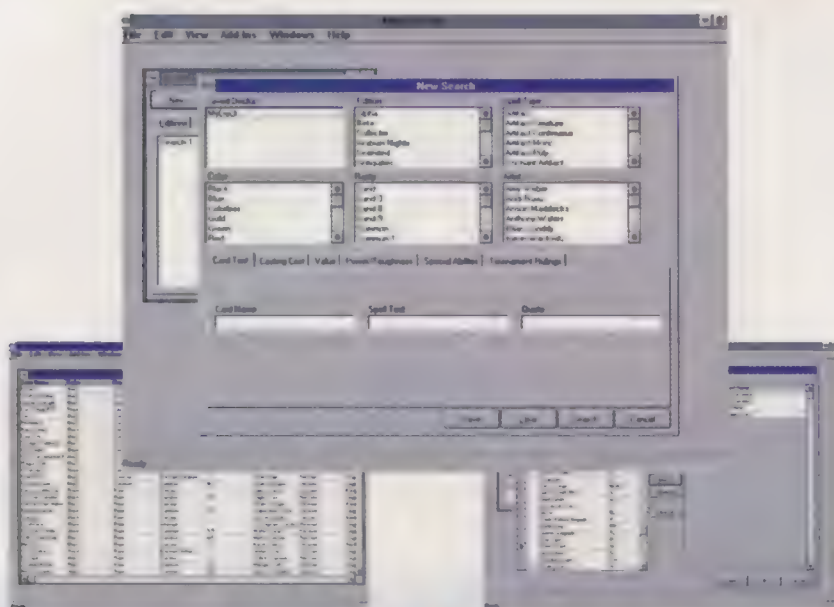
**Based on J.R.R. Tolkien's Epic Tales of
*The Hobbit and the Lord of the Rings***

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VAMPIRE

Fire and Blood



The Sabbat Hits the Street

by
Jennifer
Clarke
Wilkes

What if I told you there was no place you could run to to hide from your fears? Where good is bad and bad is good and all the tears you cry no one can hear?

—*The Players Guide to the Sabbat*



The midnight dance of *Vampire: The Eternal Struggle* is filled with deadly intrigue: a battle for power and survival as never-ending as the blood-soaked existence of its antagonists. Yet even the jaded elders of the Camarilla can feel dread—there are monsters in the night, and they call themselves the Sabbat.

Centuries ago, the Camarilla was formed to protect and control the Kindred, with princes and Justicars enforcing the six Traditions that regulate the sect. Primary among the Traditions is the Masquerade, which keeps the existence of the Kindred hidden from mortals who would otherwise hunt down and destroy them.

But not all vampires follow the Camarilla and its Traditions. Many of the younger vampires declared themselves “anarchs” and attack the princes whenever they can. Nevertheless, these rebels are still connected to the dominant clans, and can be controlled and suppressed.

Not so the Sabbat. Its purpose is completely opposed to that of the Camarilla; it would explode that ruling sect’s pathetic attempts to hide from mortals. Sabbat vampires hold that the Camarilla serves the dark purposes of the first vampires, the Antediluvians, who one day will awake from their millennia-long torpor to favour all their descendants.

The Kindred are no longer human, say they, but have moved to a higher order of being. Survival depends on accepting their inhumanity as a source of strength and freedom. Such awakened vampires will have the power to defeat the ancients when they rise—and that time will come soon.

This is the setting for *The Sabbat*, the newest expansion for *Vampire: The Eternal Struggle*. Where the two sects clash, cities dissolve in horror and flame as marauding War Parties shred the fabric of the Masquerade. Though the outcome of the struggle cannot be foreseen, both sides serve the Methuselahs equally well in their ancient war, the Jyhad. ☒

SABBAT REVEALED: Clockwise from left: CRUSADE: PHILADELPHIA, a Sabbat version of a Praxis seizure; STEAM TUNNELS, a master location card that gives stealth; CANINE HORDE, a vicious alternative to Rats’ Warning. Illustrations by Dave Seeley.

A Call To Arms: Playtesting The Sabbat

*Fear for
your
minions
when the
Sabbat
arrives;
they may
not be
around
for long.*

by
R.
Brian
Smith

We first decided to embark on our Masquerade way back when Jyhad (now Vampire: The Eternal Struggle) made its debut at our local game store. After six months of playing, we gained enough confidence in our abilities to approach Wizards of the Coast for information about playtesting V:TES and eagerly awaited our call to arms...

Over eight months later, we received a summons from Rich McGatha, the playtest coordinator, to participate in the upcoming *Sabbat* expansion playtest. After seconds of careful consideration and a review of our collective schedules, we agreed. For the next few months, *The Sabbat* consumed much of our free time. Here I hope to share some of our experiences with playtesting, and offer some commentary about the expansion.

Taking up the Gauntlet

Playtesting the set was a monumental task. When the list of cards finally arrived, it was massive: full of typos, but also full of wonderful things. With over 250 new cards, we knew we had to make sure that each card was useful, not too powerful, and appropriate for the set.

Some made an auspicious debut, then got emasculated halfway through the test, only to reappear in their original form near the end. Some were more elusive and difficult to understand at first, but we soon figured out the best uses for them. Others remain a mystery to us; their concept bizarre and purpose unclear. Fortunately there weren't very many changes to be made.

Most of the problem cards were easy to spot and fix (e.g., Angelica, The Canonicus originally allowed you to discard master cards for a bleed or intercept bonus).

Certain cards, once their play value was under-

stood, became quite dangerous and had to be reined in a little. At times this was hard to do, particularly when you really enjoyed using the card. One particularly vexing example was Masochism, which gave a vampire with Fortitude one rush counter for every point of unprevented damage it suffered. This was a great ability, since you could use rush counters to pay for cards with blood costs. Unfortunately, the

superior version allowed you to place a counter whenever a strike was declared...*any* strike. You could dodge and gain a counter; maneuver out of harm's way and gain a counter; strike to end combat and gain a counter. Although we really liked the card, we had to recommend reducing its power to keep it in the spirit of the set.

Many of the more than 400 cards have been carried over from the original core; some of the fundamental cards from each

Discipline (Blur, Enhanced Senses, Immortal Grapple) and several of the more useful master cards (Blood Doll, Short-Term Investment,

Information Highway) have found new homes in *The Sabbat*. A few original cards were also reborn in new incarnations: some very good, others useful but not exciting. Expect to see a form of The Spirit's Touch that will allow you to prevent one point of damage in combat; a version of Wake with Evening's Freshness that can be immediately replaced but costs one blood if the vampire fails to block; and a type of Rats' Warning that gives a maneuver instead of a press.

The Trial of Blood

Working with Wizards of the Coast was odd at first, but it was satisfying to finally be treated as equals by those we previously looked to for answers and to be asked our opinion on rewrites and new versions of the cards. Proof of broken cards, however, had to be compelling and based on real experience. You could rationalize all you wanted, but unless you could definitively show that a card was broken in game play, your argument earned no immediate action.

Now that the test is complete, I feel very good about *The Sabbat*. We still have concerns about some cards, but overall we think we did a good job with this set, and are eagerly awaiting the next one. We learned a lot about Wizards' playtesting process and appreciated having the opportunity to contribute to making a game we enjoy even better.



It is clear that the people directly involved with this playtest (Paul Peterson and Rich McGatha) are very concerned with the future of V:TES and want only the best for it.

The Spirit of the Sabbat

As a stand-alone set, we think that *The Sabbat* falls a little short of its goal, primarily because of a shortage of vampires for the ten new Sabbat clans. The larger number of clans has decreased their size: unlike their Camarilla counterparts, each has only eleven members. This made it more difficult to build single-clan decks.

As an expansion to the original set, though, *The Sabbat* is remarkably helpful. It adds new flexibility to many of the basic skills. Auspex can now not only intercept but has some small bleeding and damage-prevention power. Obfuscate gains some combat ability, and Celerity gains some bleeding. Minions using Thaumaturgy need not wait for a second round to inflict heavy damage. This set also includes some cards that make more sense than their non-*Sabbat* counterparts. Apportation provides Thaumaturgy with a press to continue or a maneuver. Secret Horde is an "investment" that allows you to control the amount of pool you place on it, which is matched by the blood bank. *The Sabbat* should allow anybody to build almost any type of deck they wish with relative ease (except Fortitude/Thaumaturgy decks; they still get pummeled). Overall the set feels darker, more dangerous, and more focused on combat than on politics or bleeding.

Welcome to the Masquerade; may *The Sabbat* enhance your hunting pleasure. ☒

R. Brian Smith, Steven Beaulieu, Ethan Burrow, Greg Faulkner, Cory Kanabele, and Marcin Manek began their playtesting careers with *The Sabbat*.



M

att Burke, Shawn F. Carnes, and Paul Peterson have been the central design team for every V:TES expansion and have long wanted to do a set featuring the Sabbat. There has also been considerable

fan interest: White Wolf's sourcebooks, *The Players Guide to the Sabbat* and *Storytellers Handbook to the Sabbat*, are both popular with players of *Vampire: The Masquerade*. They had also been considering a stand-alone set, akin to *Magic's Mirage: the Sabbat*, with its own political structure and varied membership, was an obvious setting. ☒ *The Sabbat* is aimed directly at *Vampire's* Gothic-Punk audience. The tone of this set is considerably darker and bloodier than that of previous V:TES expansions and thus represents an

A Call to Arms to the Designers

innovative step for Wizards of the Coast. While it still contains plenty of the political intrigue that is the core of V:TES, *The Sabbat* is much more combat-oriented, and introduces new clans and vampiric Disciplines, drawing extensively from the White Wolf source material. ☒ A natural consequence of *The Sabbat's* horrific tone is the intensity of the card illustrations, which go well beyond those in previous sets. Richard Thomas, art director for White Wolf, reviewed the illustrations to ensure they had the proper look and feel. As *The Sabbat's* art director, Jayne Ulander worked with well-known V:TES artists, commissioning illustrations that range from haunting to gruesome. Shawn adds, "Every set we do keeps getting better and better, not just from a design standpoint, but also from that of art." ☒ Another innovation in designing *The Sabbat* was extensive playtesting, far more than had been done with previous expansions. The line editor, Brian Campbell, was directly involved in both preliminary review of the card set and ongoing revision during the playtest cycle. (See "A Call to Arms" for a look at the set through playtesters' eyes.) Paul has nothing but praise for these dedicated groups of playtesters. "They had plenty of great comments," he says. "They helped change the set a lot." ☒ Advance response to the set has been very strong. Members of the design team traveled to various conventions through the summer to talk about *The Sabbat* and previewed playtest versions of cards to attendees. The reaction was "uniformly fantastic," according to Shawn. Adds Paul: "I'm very pleased.... It's going to be very true to the feel of the Sabbat." ☒

Sabbat

An Expansion for
VAMPIRE
 THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE

ID	TITLE	COST	CLASS/DISCIPLINE	TYPE/BORDER	ARTIST	RARITY
1	Magnum	2 pool		Equipment	Greg Simanson	C
2	Aaren Duggan Cameron's Toady	2 cap	obt	Lasombra	Eric LaCombe	V
3	Abiative Skin		Fortitude	Action	Richard Thomas	U
4	Adaptability	1 blood	Protean	Combat	Hannibal King	R
5	Agallas	4 cap	NOT POT	Nosferatu Antitribu	John Bolton	V
6	Aggressive Tactics	2 pool	Political	Master	John Matson	R
7	Alvaro The Scion of Angelica	9 cap	OBT POT dom pre	Lasombra	Scott Fischer	V
8	Ambush			Action	Mark Poole	C
9	Amusement Park Hunting Ground		Brujah Antitribu	Master	Dave Seeley	U
10	Anarchist Spraying			Political Action	Scott Fischer	C
11	Angela Decker	1 cap	PRE	Pander	Max Shade Fellwalker	V
12	Angelica The Canonius	10 cap	DET DOM POT	Lasombra	John Bolton	V
13	Animalism			Master	Sandra Everingham	C
14	Anton	8 cap	AUS ANI vic cel obf	Tzimisce	Larry Snelly	V
15	Antonio Delgado	9 cap	NOT POT	Lasombra	Max Shade Fellwalker	V
16	Apportation		Political	Thaumaturgy	Clint Langley	C
17	Arms of the Abyss		Political	Obtenebration	Michael Astrachan	C
18	Arson			Action	Dave Seeley	C
19	Art of Love The		Toreador-A	Master	Greg Simanson	U
20	Art of Pain The		Toreador-A	Master	Greg Simanson	R
21	Art Scum		Political	Action	John Matson	R
22	Artemis	6 cap	DEM OBF for aus cel	Malkavian Antitribu	Ken Meyer Jr	V
23	Ascendancy			Master	Max Shade Fellwalker	C
24	Aurora Van Brande Paladin	6 cap	OBT dom pot for	Lasombra	Doug Alexander	V
25	Auspex			Master	Greg Simanson	C
26	Awe		Presence	Action Modifier	Gary Leach	U
27	Ayelea The Manipulator	10 cap	THAU DOM AUS OBT pre	Tremere Antitribu	Arthur Roberg	V
28	Barrens The			Master	Dave Seeley	C
29	Basil	1 cap	obf	Pander	John Bolton	V
30	Bauble	2 blood	Vicissitude	Action	Ron Spencer	R
31	Beast The Leatherface of Detroit	7 cap	OBF POT cel ani	Nosferatu Antitribu	Pete Venters	V
32	Bestial Visage			Master	Greg Loudon	U
33	Bewitching Oration		Action Modifier	Presence	Ash Arnett	C
34	Billy	5 cap	AUS dom for	Venture Antitribu	Max Shade Fellwalker	V
35	Black Spiral Buddy	4 pool	Gangrel Antitribu	Ally	Jeff Miracola	U
36	Bliss	7 cap	CEL ANI vic obf	Gangrel Antitribu	Ken Meyer Jr	V
37	Blessing of Chaos	1 blood	Dementation	Action	Hannibal King	R
38	Blood Brother Ambush	2 blood	Brujah Antitribu	Action Modifier/Ally	Ted Naifeh	R
39	Blood Doll			Master	Larry Snelly	C
40	Blood Feast	1 blood		Action	Ken Meyer Jr	U
41	Blood of Acid	2 blood	Vicissitude	Combat	Rick O'Brien	U
42	Bloodbath	1 blood		Action	John Matson	U
43	Blur	1 blood	Combat	Celerity	Ken Meyer Jr	U
44	Body Arsenal	2 blood	Combat	Vicissitude	Mark Tedin	U
45	Body Flare	2 blood	Protean	Combat	Randy Gallegos	R
46	Bonding		Action Modifier	Dominate	Harold Arthur McNeill	C
47	Bone Spur	1 blood	Combat	Protean	Mike Dringenberg	C
48	Bonecraft	1 blood	Combat	Vicissitude	Ron Spencer	C
49	Boxed In		Combat	Combat	Matt Cavotta	C
50	Boy Toy	2 cap	dem	Malkavian Antitribu	Larry Snelly	V
51	Brass Knuckles	0 pool	Equipment	Combat	Ron Spencer	C
52	Breath of the Dragon	1 blood	Vicissitude	Combat	Pete Venters	U
53	Brim		Action Modifier	Action Modifier	Corey Macourek	U
54	Brownen	10 cap	CEL POT PRE dom obt	Brujah Antitribu	Ken Meyer Jr	V
55	Brooke	3 cap	THAU dom	Tremere Antitribu	John Bolton	V
56	Bruisers The	3 pool	Brujah Antitribu	Ally	Matt Cavotta	V
57	Bryan Van Duesen	7 cap	THAU DOM aus pre	Tremere Antitribu	Jeff Miracola	V
58	Cailean	10 cap	ANI OBF POT PRE obt	Nosferatu Antitribu	Will Simpson	V
59	Caith	5 cap	PRE ANI	Gangrel Antitribu	Doug Alexander	V
60	Calebos	8 cap	ANI OBF POT cel	Nosferatu Antitribu	Larry Snelly	V
61	Call the Lamprey		Obtenebration	Combat	Alan Rabinowitz	U
62	Canis lupus		Political Action	Political Action	Jason Brubaker	R
63	Canis lupus	2 blood	Lasombra	Retainer	Zina Saunders	R
64	Cameron	3 cap	dom pot	Lasombra	Scott Fischer	V
65	Campground Hunting Ground	2 pool	Gangrel Antitribu	Master	Ron Spencer	U
66	Caroline Hinkle		Political	Animalism	Dave Seeley	C
67	Cardinal Benediction		Political Action	Political Action	Hannibal King	R
68	Cardinal Sin Failure of Mission	2 blood	Reaction	Reaction	David Fooden	U
69	Cardinal Sin Insubordination		Reaction	Reaction	Michael Astrachan	U
70	Carrion Coffin		Protean	Action	Stuart Beel	U
71	Carrion Crows		Combat	Animalism	Michael Dixon	C
72	Cartel	2 cap	cel	Toreador Antitribu	Max Shade Fellwalker	V
73	Cassidy		Presence	Combat	Clint Langley	U
74	Cassidy		Reaction	Animalism	Greg Simanson	C
75	Cassidy	1 blood	Combat	Thaumaturgy	Drew Tucker	C
76	Celery		Master	Master	Greg Simanson	C
77	Changeling		Action Modifier	Vicissitude	Jeff Miracola	C
78	Changeling Skin Mask	1 pool	Equipment	Equipment	Mark Tedin	R
79	Charming the Beast	1 blood	Combat	Combat	Michael Astrachan	C
80	Christine Boscacci	2 cap	dom vic	Pander	Ken Meyer Jr	V
81	City Gangrel Connections		Gangrel Antitribu	Master	Fred Harper	U
82	Claven	4 cap	dem obf aus	Malkavian Antitribu	Alan Rabinowitz	V
83	Gloak the Gathering		Action Modifier	Obfuscate	Ted Naifeh	U
84	Gode of Milan Suspended		Political Action	Political Action	Drew Tucker	R
85	Goma	3 blood	Dementation	Combat	Ash Arnett	U
86	Combat Shotgun	3 pool	Equipment	Equipment	Michael Dixon	U
87	Command of the Beast		Dominate	Action Modifier	Lee Carter	U
88	Communal Haven Temple	1 pool	Sabbat	Master	Drew Tucker	U
89	Computer Hacking		Action	Action	Roger Raupp	C
90	Concoction of Vitality	1 pool	Equipment	Equipment	Ash Arnett	U
91	Confusion		Action Modifier	Dementation	Gary Leach	C
92	Conspicuous Boon		Political Action	Political Action	Randy Gallegos	C
93	Consecration Rites		Action	Action	Harold Arthur McNeill	U
94	Corne Marson	6 cap	VIC AUS ani	Tzimisce	Chris Rush	C
95	Corporate Hunting Ground	2 pool	Venture Antitribu	Master	John Bolton	C
96	Creation Rites	1 blood	Action	Action	Michael Astrachan	C
97	Crimson Sentinel The	2 pool	Equipment	Equipment	Mike Wilson	C
98	Crusade Atlanta		Political Action	Political Action	Richard Thomas	C
99	Crusade Chicago		Political Action	Political Action	James Allen Higgins	C
100	Crusade Detroit		Political Action	Political Action	Clint Langley	C
101	Crusade Houston		Political Action	Political Action	Drew Tucker	C
102	Crusade Mexico City		Political Action	Political Action	Heather J McKinney	C
103	Crusade Miami		Political Action	Political Action	Anarchy	C
104	Crusade Philadelphia		Political Action	Political Action	Dave Seeley	C
105	Crusade Pittsburgh		Political Action	Political Action	Clint Langley	C
106	Crusade Toronto		Political Action	Political Action	Clint Langley	C
107	Cryptic Mission		Action	Action	Harold Arthur McNeill	C
108	Cryptic Rider	1 blood	Action	Action Modifier	Sue Ann Harkey	C
109	Cull the Herd	1 blood	Action	Action	Pete Kim	C
110	Dan	2 cap	ani	Nosferatu Antitribu	Ted Naifeh	C
111	Daring the Dawn		Fortitude	Action Modifier	Pete Venters	C
112	Dauntain Black Magician (Changeling)	3 pool	Malkavian Antitribu	Ally	MARK Cavotta	C
113	Decapitate	2 blood	Potence	Combat	Randy Gallegos	C
114	Dementation		Master	Master	Alan Rabinowitz	C
115	Demonstration	1 pool	Venture Antitribu	Master	Pete Kim	C
116	Derange		Dementation	Action	Eric LaCombe	C
117	Detection		Master	Master	Greg Simanson	C
118	Devin Bisley	5 blood	AUS ANI vic	Tzimisce	Karl Waller	C
119	Direct Intervention	1 pool	Master	Master	Harold Arthur McNeill	C
120	Dirty Little Secrets		Nosferatu Antitribu	Action Modifier	Ron Spencer	C
121	Disarm		Protean	Combat	L A Williams	C
122	Disguised Weapon		Obfuscate	Obfuscate	Eric LaCombe	C
123	Disputed Territory		Political Action	Political Action	Stuart Beel	C
124	Dissolution	1 blood	Political	Combat	Ron Spencer	C
125	Dodd	5 cap	CEL pre dom	Brujah Antitribu	T Bradstreet & G Goleas	C
126	Dominate		Master	Master	Mike Dringenberg	C
127	Domino		Master	Master	T Bradstreet & G Goleas	C
128	Donation	9 cap	AUS PRE cel pot	Toreador Antitribu	Rick Berry	C
129	Dracos	7 cap	AUS ANI vic	Tzimisce	Mark Tedin	C
130	Dread Gaze		Presence	Presence	Hannibal King	C
131	Dylan	6 cap	dom for aus cel pre	Venture Antitribu	Ken Meyer Jr	V
132	Ebriety	1 blood	Thaumaturgy	Combat	Richard Thomas	C
133	Elysian Fields	2 pool	Master	Master	Ken Meyer Jr	C
134	Enchanted Marrow	3 pool	Malkavian Antitribu	Equipment	Sandra Everingham	C
135	Enchanted Senses		Reaction	Auspex	Philip Tan	C
136	Entombment	2 blood	Obtenebration	Combat	L A Williams	C
137	Escalated Mental Warfare	2 pool	Malkavian Antitribu	Ally	Larry Snelly	C
138	Ethos Locke	9 cap	THAU DOM pot aus cel	Tremere Antitribu	Ken Meyer Jr	V
139	Exorcism		Political Action	Political Action	Richard Thomas	C
140	Eyes of Chaos		Action Modifier	Dementation	Eric LaCombe	C
141	Eyes of the Night		Reaction	Obtenebration	Harold Arthur McNeill	C
142	Fade from View	1 blood	Obfuscate	Combat	Jeff Kueck	C
143	Fake Out		Combat	Combat	Corey Macourek	C
144	Fast Hands	1 blood	Celerity	Combat	Karl Waller	C
145	Femur of Toomler	2 pool	Tzimisce	Equipment	Mark Tedin	C
146	Feshah	1 pool	Master	Master	Patrick Kochakji	C
147	Fetish Club Hunting Ground	2 pool	Toreador-A	Master	Mike Dringenberg	C
148	Fire Dance		Action	Action	David Fooden	U
149	Fire in the Blood	1 blood	Potence	Combat	Ted Naifeh	C
150	Fleshthrower	4 pool	Equipment	Equipment	Matt Wilson	C
151	Flash		Combat	Celerity	John McCrea	C
152	Fleshcraft		Combat	Vicissitude	Pete Venters	C
153	Forced Awakening		Reaction	Reaction	Alan Rabinowitz	C
154	Forgotten Labyrinth	1 blood	Obfuscate	Action Modifier	Drew Tucker	C
155	Fortitude		Master	Master	Ron Spencer	C
156	Fractured Armament		Combat	Potence	Dave Seeley	C
157	Frederick the Weak	2 cap	pre	Brujah Antitribu	Mike Dringenberg	C
158	Gang Tactics		Nosferatu	Action Modifier	Pete Venters	C
159	Gang Territory	2 pool	Brujah Antitribu	Master	Fred Harper	C
160	Gangrel Conspiracy		Gangrel Antitribu	Master	Corey Macourek	C
161	Gangrel Slave	3 pool	Tremere Antitribu	Ally	Alan Rabinowitz	C
162	Gas-Powered Chainsaw	1 blood	Equipment	Equipment	Randy Gallegos	C
163	Genevee	10 cap	ANI FOR PRO dom aus	Gangrel Antitribu	Larry Snelly	V
164	Gerard	5 cap	for aus dom obt	Venture Antitribu	Larry Snelly	V
165	Ghouled Street Thug	2 pool	Pander	Ally	John Strotto	U
166	Gillian Kradner	2 cap	ani dem	Pander	Larry Snelly	U
167	Gleam of Red Eyes		Combat	Protean	Ron Spencer	C
168	Goth Band	2 pool	Toreador-A	Ally	Matt Wilson	C
169	Gratiano	8 cap	OBT DOM obt pot	Lasombra	Doug Alexander	V
170	Guard Dogs		Reaction	Animalism	Michael Dixon	C
171	Guardian Ghoul	1 pool	Tzimisce	Ally	Ted Naifeh	C
172	Guido Luciano	5 cap	OBT dom obt	Lasombra	Joe Ziolkowski	C
173	Hand of Conrad	1 pool	Equipment	Equipment	L A Williams	C
174	Hannibal	10 cap	AUS OBF DEM dom cel	Malkavian Antitribu	Doug Alexander	V
175	Herrick Schlempt	2 cap	THAU	Tremere Antitribu	T Bradstreet & G Goleas	C
176	Hidden Pathways	1 blood	Obfuscate	Action	Craig Maher	C
177	Horatio	2 cap	Tzimisce	Tzimisce	Jeff Miracola	C
178	Horrid Form	1 blood	Vicissitude	Combat	Craig Maher	C
179	Huang Blood Cultist	1 cap	PRE	Pander	Zina Saunders	C
180	Hugo	4 cap	POT vic pre	Brujah Antitribu	Anson Middlecks	C
181	Hungry Coyote The	2 pool	Master	Master	Mike Dringenberg	C
182	Ian Forestal	8 cap	THAU AUS DOM	Tremere Antitribu	Drew Tucker	C
183	Ian Wallingford	6 cap	CEL PRE aus	Toreador Antitribu	Drew Tucker	C
184	Ignacio The Black Priest	4 cap	pot dom obt	Lasombra	Mike Dringenberg	C
185	Immortal Grapple		Presence	Equipment	Clint Langley	C
186	Imogen	9 cap	AUS DEM pro vic obf	Malkavian Antitribu	Then Mava	C
187	Infamous Warlock		Master	Master	James Allen Higgins	C
188	Infernal Warlock	2 blood	Thaumaturgy	Master	L A Williams	C
189	Infernal Pact	1 pool	Tremere Antitribu	Master	Ron Spencer	C
190	Information Highway		Master	Master	Sue Ann Harkey	C
191	Ingrid Russo	4 cap	for DOM	Venture Antitribu	Doug Alexander	C
192	Innocent Bystander		Action Modifier	Action Modifier	Peter Kim	C
193	Institution Hunting Ground	2 pool	Malkavian Antitribu	Master	Greg Loudon	C
194	Intimidation		Presence	Action	Karl Waller	C
195	Investiture		Political Action	Political Action	Rick O'Brien	C
196	Jaeko	8 cap	CEL PRE POT obt	Brujah Antitribu	T Bradstreet & G Goleas	C
197	Jacob Bragg	3 cap	cel pot	Brujah Antitribu	Alan Rabinowitz	C
198	Jessica	7 cap	AUS CEL PRE OBT	Toreador Antitribu	Ken Meyer Jr	V
199	Jimmy Dunn	4 cap	POT CEL for	Political	Mike Dringenberg	C
200	Josef	4 cap	obt ani	Nosferatu Antitribu	Drew Tucker	C
201	Josh Werner	6 cap	AUS PRE ani	Toreador Antitribu	Pete Venters	C

CARD TITLE	COST	CLAN/DISCIPLINE	TYPE/BORDER	ARTIST	RARITY
202. Juan Cali	3 cap	for aus	Venture Antitribu	John Bolton	V
203. Kendrick	7 cap	ANI POT obf aus	Nosferatu Antitribu	Jeff Kimek	V
204. Kj Dansky	8 cap	THAU AUS DOM obt	Tremere Antitribu	Rick Berry	V
205. Kindred Spirits		Auspex		Greg Loudon	C
206. Korah	7 cap	DEM OBF AUS ani	Malkavian Antitribu	Larry Snelly	V
207. Kurt Strauss	5 cap	DOM aus thau	Tremere Antitribu	Philip Tan	V
208. Lachlan, Noddist	8 cap	AUS CEL PRE dom	Toreador Antitribu	Michael Astrachan	V
209. Lambach	10 cap	VIC DOM AUS ANI pre	Tzmiscie	T Bradstreet & G Goleash	V
210. Laptop Computer	1 blood	Equipment		Darry Elliott	C
211. Lazvernius, Thrall of Lambach	10 cap	AUS DOM FOR POT pro	Venture Antitribu	Zina Saunders	V
212. Leather Jacket		Equipment		T Bradstreet & G Goleash	C
213. Legacy of Caine		Political Action	Master	Harold Arthur McNeill	R
214. Legacy of Pander		Political Action	Master	Dave Seeley	R
215. Lena Rowe	3 cap	aus obf pre	Pander	Ken Meyer, Jr	V
216. Leon	3 cap	ani for	Gangrel Antitribu	John Bolton	V
217. Library Hunting Ground	2 pool	Tzmiscie	Master	Mark Tedin	V
218. Lightning Reflexes	1 blood	Celerity	Combat	Michael Astrachan	R
219. Lisette Vuzquel	6 cap	POT DOM pro	Lasombra	Ken Meyer, Jr.	V
220. Living Manes	1 blood	Tzmiscie	Equipment	Mark Tedin	R
221. Lolita	3 cap	pre for	Toreador Antitribu	T Bradstreet & G Goleash	V
222. Lolita Houston	4 cap	VIC aus	Tzmiscie	Ken Meyer, Jr.	V
223. Lost in Crowds		Action Modifier	Dominate	Drew Tucker	C
224. Luther	6 cap	ANI for pro obt	Gangrel Antitribu	Mike Drnngenberg	V
225. Lyndhurst Estate, Royal Park	3 blood		Equipment	Mike Drnngenberg	U
226. Maikavan Derangement: Maikavan		Thaumaturgy	Combat	Clint Langley	R
227. Maikavan Derangement: Maikavan		Thaumaturgy	Master	Philip Tan	U
228. Maikavan Game		Malkavian Antitribu	Master	Patrick Kochakji	U
229. Manstopper Rounds		Combat		Mike Weaver	U
230. March Halcyon	1 cap	for	Pander	Ken Meyer, Jr	V
231. Marked Path		Obfuscate	Action Modifier	Harold Arthur McNeill	U
232. Marlene, The Infernalist	6 cap	AUS DOM for dem thau	Venture Antitribu	Larry Snelly	V
233. Masochism		Fortitude	Action	Will Simpson	R
234. Matheus, Flesh Sculptor	10 cap	AUS CEL PRE VIC	Toreador Antitribu	Mark Tedin	V
235. Meat Cleaver	1 pool	Action	Equipment	Michael Astrachan	U
236. Media Influence	1 blood	Auspex	Presence	Darry Elliott	C
237. Melange		Auspex	Reaction	Harold Arthur McNeill	R
238. Meshenka	8 cap	VIC AUS ANI	Tzmiscie	Doug Alexander	U
239. Mind of a Child	3 blood	Dementation	Action	Michael Astrachan	V
240. Mind Rape	2 blood	Dominate	Action	Scott M. Bakal	R
241. Mind Tricks	1 blood	Action Modifier	Dementation	Eric LaCombe	C
242. Mistaken Identity	1 blood	Reaction		Brian Horton	U
243. Mitchell, The Headhunter	2 cap	pot obt	Pander	John Bolton	V
244. Mob Connections		Master		Greg Simanson	U
245. Monique	5 cap	ani for pro aus	Gangrel Antitribu	Max Shade Fellwalker	V
246. Monomyth		Sabbat	Action	Corey Maccourek	U
247. Muneil Foucade	5 cap	DEM aus	Malkavian Antitribu	Max Shade Fellwalker	V
248. My Enemy's Enemy		Auspex	Reaction	Dave Seeley	R
249. Naphandus (Mage)	2 pool	Tremere Antitribu	Ally	Larry Snelly	R
250. Nigel the Shunned	5 cap	ANI POT obt	Nosferatu Antitribu	T Bradstreet & G Goleash	V
251. Night Moves		Obfuscate	Action	Jason Alexander Behnke	U
252. Nosferatu Kingdom	2 pool	Nosferatu Antitribu	Dominate	Richard Thomas	R
253. Obsession		Dominate	Presence	L. A. Williams	U
254. Obsession	2 pool	Master	Master	Larry Snelly	C
255. Obsession		Master	Master	Mark Tedin	U
256. Obtebneration		Master	Master	Alan Rabinowitz	C
257. Olivia	5 cap	POT OBF vic	Nosferatu Antitribu	Pete Venters	V
258. Orgy of Blood		Sabbat	Combat	Harold Arthur McNeill	R
259. Out of Control	2 pool	Master	Master	Greg Loudon	U
260. Pack Tactics	1 blood	Reaction		Patrick Kochakji	C
261. Palla Caramella		Toreador-A	Master	Thana Vick	R
262. Passions		Action	Dementation	Thea Maia	C
263. Peace Treaty		Political Action	Political Action	Michael Astrachan	C
264. Pentax™ Loves You!	2 pool	Master	Master	Mike Weaver	U
265. Peter	6 cap	OBF PRO for thau	Gangrel Antitribu	Peter Venters	V
266. Plasmic Form	1 blood	Action Modifier/Combat	Vicissitude	Pete Venters	C
267. Political Antagonist	2 pool	Venture Antitribu	Ally	Brian Ashmore	R
268. Political Hunting Ground	2 pool	Lasombra	Master	John Scetello	U
269. Political Seizure	2 pool	Lasombra	Master	Fred Harper	U
270. Political Stronghold		Political Action		Brian Ashmore	U
271. Political Struggle		Action		Patrick Kochakji	R
272. Potence		Lasombra	Master	Randy Gallegos	C
273. Power Structure		Master	Master	Patrick Kochakji	R
274. Powerbase: Mexico City	2 pool	Master	Master	Fred Harper	U
275. Powerbase: New York	1 pool	Master	Master	Ted Naifeh	U
276. Precognition		Reaction	Auspex	Eric LaCombe	C
277. Presence		Master	Master	Mike Drnngenberg	C
278. Preternatural Evasion		Combat	Celerity	Jeff Miracola	C
279. Primal Instincts	1 blood	Combat	Auspex	Kevin McCann	C
280. Propaganda	2 blood	Presence	Presence	Ken Meyer, Jr.	U
281. Protean		Master	Master	Joe Ziolkowski	C
282. Pulse of the Canaille	3 blood	Auspex	Action	Hannibal King	U
283. Purgatory		Combat	Celerity	Kevin McCann	C
284. Pushing the Limit	1 blood	Dominate	Potence	John McCrea	C
285. Quentin	9 cap	AUS DOM FOR cel obt	Venture Antitribu	Mike Drnngenberg	V
286. Quick Exit		Combat	Obfuscate	Jeff Miracola	C
287. Quick Mind		Combat	Protean	Randy Gallegos	C
288. Quickness	1 blood	Celerity	Combat	Craig Maher	U
289. Quira, The Bitch Queen	6 cap	OBF AUS thau obt	Malkavian Antitribu	Pete Venters	V
290. Ramiro	4 cap	dom obt vic	Lasombra	John Bolton	V
291. Rapid Change	1 blood	Action Modifier/Combat	Protean	Craig Maher	C
292. Rapid Thought		Celerity	Combat	Clint Langley	U
293. Raptor	2 blood	Animalism	Retainer	Ron Spencer	U
294. Recruiting Party		Venture Antitribu	Action	Brian Ashmore	R
295. Recruitment	2 pool	Master	Master	Diana Vick	C
296. Reflection		Reaction	Dominate	Clint Langley	C
297. Reform Body		Vicissitude	Combat/Reaction	L. A. Williams	R
298. Regaining the Upper Hand		Political Action	Political Action	Will Simpson	C
299. Regeneration		Action	Fortitude	Mike Thomas Fellwalker	C
300. Remillard, Devout Crusader	4 cap	AUS pre	Toreador Antitribu	Mike Drnngenberg	V
301. Remission		Fortitude	Combat	Karl Waller	U
302. Resurrection		Action	Fortitude	Ash Arnett	C
303. Revelations	1 blood	Auspex	Action	Ash Arnett	U
304. Revenant	1 blood	Tzmiscie	Retainer	Pete Venters	U
305. Reverend Blackwood	6 cap	THAU DOM obf	Tremere Antitribu	John Bolton	V
306. Rex, The Necronomist	3 cap	pot pro vic	Protean	Philip Tan	V

CARD TITLE	COST	CLAN/DISCIPLINE	TYPE/BORDER	ARTIST	RARITY
307. Richard Tauber	4 cap	AUS thau	Tremere Antitribu	Thea Maia	V
308. Richter	7 cap	POT CEL for pre	Brujah Antitribu	Max Shade Fellwalker	V
309. The Templar of Du Mont					
310. Ragby, Crusade Vanguard	5 cap	CEL PRE pot aus	Brujah Antitribu	Larry Snelly	V
311. Rolling with the Punches		Combat	Fortitude	Lee Carter	C
312. Royca	1 cap	dom	Pander	Darryl Elliott	U
313. Rumor Mill, Tabloid Newspaper, The	1 pool		Master	Peter Kim	V
314. Sabbat Inquisitor		Political Action	Political Action	Ken Meyer, Jr	U
315. Sacrament of Carnage	1 blood	Combat	Potence	Larry Snelly	C
316. Sadie	2 cap	pro	Political Action	Clint Langley	U
317. Salinger	9 cap	CEL POT PRE thau	Gangrel Antitribu	Sandra Everingham	V
318. Samantha	10 cap	CEL OBF PRO thau ani	Gangrel Antitribu	Larry Snelly	V
319. Samson	2 cap	Master	Venture Antitribu	Karl Waller	V
320. Sarah Brando	3 cap	CEL	Brujah Antitribu	Alan Rabinowitz	V
321. Scouting Mission		Action	Dominate	Scott Fischer	C
322. Screw the Masquerade!		Political Action	Political Action	Mark Tedin	C
323. Scrying of Secrets	1 blood	Auspex	Action Modifier	John Bolton	U
324. Secret Horde	X pool	Master	Master	Michael Astrachan	C
325. Sela	6 cap	PRE POT cel obt	Brujah Antitribu	Sandra Everingham	V
326. Sermion of Caine		Master	Master	Dave Seeley	C
327. Shade	1 blood	Obtebneration	Retainer	Stuart Bee	U
328. Shadow Body	1 blood	Combat	Obtebneration	Mike Drnngenberg	C
329. Shadow Court Satyr (Changing)	3 pool	Gangrel Antitribu	Ally	Ken Meyer, Jr	R
330. Shadow of the Beast	1 blood	Protean	Action	Craig Maher	U
331. Shadow Play	1 blood	Action Modifier	Obtebneration	Stuart Bee	C
332. Shadow Step		Obtebneration	Combat	Richard Thomas	U
333. Shane Grmald	4 cap	ani pot dom	Gangrel Antitribu	Zina Saunders	V
334. Shanty Town	2 pool	Nosferatu Antitribu	Master	Mike Weaver	U
335. Hunting Ground					
336. Sheila Mezarin	6 cap	AUS PRE cel for	Toreador Antitribu	John Bolton	V
337. Short-Term Investment	1 pool	Master	Master	Drew Tucker	C
338. Shotgun Ritual	2 blood	Thaumaturgy	Combat	Hannibal King	U
339. Shroud of Night	0 blood	Action Modifier	Obtebneration	Jason Alexander Behnke	C
340. Side Strike		Combat	Celerity	Dave Seeley	U
341. Skim of Rock		Combat	Fortitude	Clint Langley	C
342. Slaughtering the Herd	2 blood	Dominate	Action	Randy Gallegos	U
343. Slave Auction	1 pool	Master	Master	Fred Harper	R
344. Sleeping Mind, The	1 blood	Action Modifier	Dominate	Greg Simanson	C
345. Social Charms		Action	Presence	Mike Drnngenberg	C
346. Song in the Dark	2 blood	Animalism	Combat	Stuart Bee	R
347. Song of Serenity		Animalism	Thaumaturgy	Michael Astrachan	C
348. Soul Burn	1 blood	Essential	Thaumaturgy	Craig Maher	C
349. Speed of Thought	1 blood	Celerity	Action	Will Simpson	R
350. Spirit Summoning Chamber	2 pool	Tremere Antitribu	Master	Mike Weaver	U
351. Spirit's Touch		Reaction	Auspex	Hannibal King	C
352. Sport Bike	1 pool	Equipment	Equipment	Ken Meyer, Jr	U
353. Staredown		Combat	Presence	Kevin McCann	C
354. Steam Tunnels		Nosferatu Antitribu	Master	Dave Seeley	U
355. Stravinsky	9 cap	VIC AUS ANI pot	Tzmiscie	Sandra Everingham	V
356. Submachine Gun	4 pool	Equipment	Equipment	Dave Seeley	U
357. Succubus	4 pool	Tremere Antitribu	Ally	Ken Meyer, Jr	R
358. Sudden Reversal		Master	Master	Harold Arthur McNeill	U
359. Summon the Abyss	3 blood	Essential	Action	Dave Seeley	R
360. Sunrise Service		Action	Action	Alan Rabinowitz	R
361. Supper Mettle	1 blood	Essential	Fortitude	T Bradstreet & G Goleash	C
362. Surprise Influence		Reaction	Reaction	Clint Langley	C
363. Survivalist	2 pool	Brujah Antitribu	Ally	Drew Tucker	U
364. Swallowed by the Night		Action/Mutual Combat	Obfuscate	Thea Maia	C
365. Sword of Judgment	2 pool	Brujah Antitribu	Equipment	Richard Thomas	R
366. Telepathic Counter		Auspex	Reaction	Darryl Elliott	C
367. Terror Frenzy	1 blood	Animalism	Combat	Jeff Kimek	R
368. Thanks for the Donation		Action	Dominate	Clint Langley	R
369. Thaumaturgy		Master	Master	Ash Arnett	C
370. Theft of Vitae		Combat	Thaumaturgy	Michael Astrachan	C
371. Theloniuz	4 cap	THAU OBF aus	Tremere Antitribu	Alan Rabinowitz	V
372. Threats		Action Modifier	Dominate	Matt Wilson	C
373. Thrown Gate		Essential	Potence	Ron Spencer	C
374. Tier of Souls		Animalism	Action	Harold Arthur McNeill	R
375. Tithings		Political Action	Political Action	James Allen Higgins	R
376. Tommy	3 cap	pot ani	Nosferatu Antitribu	Ash Arnett	V
377. Transfer of Power		Political Action	Political Action	Matt Cavotta	C
378. Trap		Combat	Combat	Peter Kim	C
379. Tribute to the Master		Master	Master	Jeremy C. Bills	C
380. Twisted Forest	2 pool	Gangrel Antitribu	Master	Ken Meyer, Jr	C
381. Twisting the Knife	1 blood	Potence	Combat	Scott Fischer	R
382. Unacceptable Appearance		Master	Master	Pete Venters	U
383. Unholy Possession		Fortitude	Combat	Clint Langley	U
384. Undead Strength		Combat	Potence	Will Simpson	U
385. University Hunting Ground	2 pool	Tremere Antitribu	Master	Mike Raabe	U
386. Unnatural Disaster	2 pool	Master	Master	Ted Naifeh	U
387. Up Yours!	1 blood	Combat	Combat	Dave Fooden	R
388. Using the Advantage	1 pool	No-A	Master	Matt Wilson	R
389. Vanessa	6 cap	DOM FOR aus pre	Venture Antitribu	Max Shade Fellwalker	V
390. Vandytasena	9 cap	AUS DEM OBF dom pot	Malkavian Antitribu	Alan Rabinowitz	V
391. Vengeance		Action	Action	Philip Tan	U
392. Venture Investment		Venture Antitribu	Master	Greg Loudon	U
393. Vicissitude		Master	Master	Alan Rabinowitz	C
394. Vicissitude Poisoning		Master	Master	Ron Spencer	U
395. Violet Revell, Loyalist	5 cap	CEL aus pre dem	Toreador Antitribu	Karl Waller	V
396. Violet Tremain	6 cap	vic dom thau pre	Tzmiscie	Pete Venters	V
397. Virgil	8 cap	AUS DEM OBF cel	Malkavian Antitribu	Drew Tucker	V
398. Voter Captivation		Action Modifier	Action Modifier	Tom Gianni	U
399. Walk of Flame		Thaumaturgy	Combat	Scott Fischer	U
400. Walk through Arcadia	1 blood	Essential	Action Modifier	Philip Tan	R
401. War Ghoul	3 pool	Tzmiscie	Ally	Mark Tedin	R
402. War Party		Sabbat	Action	Tom Gianni	U
403. Wave of Insanity		Dementation	Action	Drew Tucker	R
404. Wendy Wade	3 cap	ani aus	Tzmiscie	Chris Rush	U
405. White Phosphorus Grenade	1 pool	Equipment	Equipment	Scott Fischer	U
406. Wolf Claws	1 blood	Combat	Protean	Ron Spencer	C
407. Wolf Companion	1 blood	Essential	Retainer	Zina Saunders	U
408. Yong-Sun, Harmonist	10 cap	ANI OBF POT THAU aus	Nosferatu Antitribu	Kevin McCann	V
409. York	3 cap	pot ani	Malkavian Antitribu	Doug Alexander	V
410. Zachary	7 cap	CEL OBF PRO pre for	Gangrel Antitribu	Mark Tedin	V

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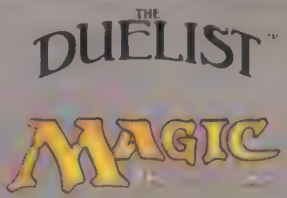
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- B. Feral Instinct
- C. Undo
- D. Dark Privilege
- E. Ovinomancer

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Inside the Industry

Reports on Trading Card Games

The New Dice

Since its release last year, Lester Smith's fun, innovative **Dragon Dice** (TSR, Inc.) has sold nearly 14 million dice, an average of 47,000 a day. TSR prefers the term "expandable" to "collectible," but many fans strive to complete a set. (The first two complete sets of **Dragon Dice** went to Wizards of the Coast staffer Glenn Elliott. So said TSR Vice President Jim Ward when Elliott traded a box of *Legends* for a huge bag of dice at last year's GenCon in Milwaukee.)

The surest signs of the game's novelty and success were its awkward growing pains, which recall the Alpha/Beta edition of **Magic: The Gathering**. **Dragon Dice's** original slender rules sheets spawned an eighty-page Frequently Asked Questions file and, later, a rules revision to reduce the effectiveness of magic. The first expansion series, *Amazons*, saw sorting problems. Now TSR has evidently worked the wrinkles out of its rules and production, and the game continues to build momentum.

The remarkable success of **Dragon Dice** has spawned a new category. It's encouraging that all these new dice games—and an early precursor, last year's **Throwing Stones**—take completely different design approaches.

Lester Smith's second game in the form, **Chaos Progenitus** (Destination Games), appeared at GenCon this August. Smith left TSR last year to start Destination with Tim Brown, another former TSR staffer.

Chaos Progenitus (its original name, "Chaos Marauders," had trademark problems) concerns a slugfest between chimerical, other-dimensional monsters.

Each die represents a body part; a thirteen-die creature may have any weird combination of limbs, brains, tentacles, and weapons. You lose when you run out of body parts to roll. Play moves fast but is somewhat limited by the lack of maneuvering; and, even more than in **Dragon Dice**, it's hard to recover once you fall behind.

Iron Crown Enterprises' **Dicemaster** uses much prettier dice to simulate a character's journey across a monster-infested landscape. You roll provisions dice to move from terrain die to terrain die, roll weapons to fight the monster dice at each stop, and search cities for the six runic clues you need to win. Play is said to be slow but flavorful. The basic *Cities of Doom* set and the *Wilds of Doom* expansion are, for the most part, fixed sets. Randomly sorted *Doom Cubes* boosters permit an advanced game.

If **Magic** history is a guide, none of the new dice will roll over **Dragon Dice** until and unless they land a major license. Like **Magic**, DD has prompted financial euphoria and irrational players. At GenCon the DD fervor showed in the long lines at the giant gumball machine that dispensed promotional DD dice for fifty cents each. One evening a TSR employee threw a big blue die in front of me and said, "Want a collector's item? Hold up that die in the Exhibitors' Hall, shout 'Forty bucks!' and you'll sell it like that." He snapped his fingers, then threw down a red die. "Here, take this common die, too. You can get maybe forty cents for that."

I looked at the two dice. "These are exactly the same," I said. He laughed. "No! No! The blue die is rare!"

— Allen Varney (<APVarney@aol.com>)



GAME NEWS & UPDATES

For more information, contact the email address or website at the end of each entry. An excellent source of news on the World Wide Web is Sprig's CCG Warehouse <www.itis.com/other-games>.

■ **Arcadia** (White Wolf Game Studio, Atlanta, GA): The second game of the trilogy, *King Ironheart's Madness*, is due in December (15-card Story Boosters and Character Boosters, \$2.50). "Characters must race against time to discover the secret of Ironheart's power before his armies overwhelm Lord Gamine's forces in Ardenmore." Players can carry over characters from *Wyld Hunt* or start anew. <wolfmail@aol.com>

■ **Dark Age** (FPG, Pittsburgh, PA): *The Brood*, November's 225-card sequel to *Feudal Lords*, is a separate game with different rules, but Brood decks can play against Feudal decks. The set concerns "genetically engineered beings gone amuck," says Dave Gentzler, co-designer (with Luke Peterschmidt).

"Brooders" can grow stronger during play by flipping up cards with growth numbers—but good growth numbers also bring unfortunate mutations. The game uses all the artists from *Feudal Lords* except Timothy Bradstreet.

■ **FPG's Guardians** is now entering a "lull," says Gentzler, while designer Keith Parkinson prepares a large *Dinotopia*-style art/fiction book for Ballantine. <fpgqna@aol.com>

■ **Highlander** (Thunder Castle Games, Kansas City, MO): Mike Sager's 100-card *Watcher's Chronicle* expansion, the second based on the Fox TV series, appears in November (15-card boosters in three rarities, \$2.95). For a planned November expansion to August's *Highlander Movie Edition*, Thunder Castle has had problems

GAME NEWS & UPDATES

continued

securing the right to use images of Sean Connery, who played Ramirez in the first movie. Company president Sager has not revealed how he would handle a Connery-less set but said the issue would be decided by October. Thunder Castle plans a *Highlander* RPG next spring. <TCGames@aol.com>; Web: <www.tcgames.com>

■ **Legend of the Five Rings** (Five Rings Publishing, formerly Alderac Entertainment Group, Bellevue, WA): A beginners' box, *Battle of Beiden Pass*, should be out now (\$29.95). The set includes two fixed decks (Crab clan vs. Lion) and an improved rulebook. Later this year comes *Anvil of Despair*, a 152-card expansion sold in starters and boosters. Designed by the regular L5R team (Dave Williams, Ryan Dancey, John Zinser, John Wick, D. J. Trindle), *Anvil* introduces two new clans (Toturi's Army and Yugojunzo's Horde) and a new card type: ancestors, followers that give bonuses to their clans. At this year's GenCon in Milwaukee, Five Rings gave away 10,000 free L5R decks. <mouse@frpg.com>

■ **Middle-earth: The Wizards** (Iron Crown Enterprises, Charlottesville, VA): The second expansion, *Dark Minions*, should be out now. The 180-card set introduces minions, active character-related hazards (Grima Wormtongue, Bill Ferny) who move among sites to hinder companies; Under-deep sites, accessible only from specific "surface" sites, and accompanying Lost Items, playable only in the Under-deep; and Quests to Sauron's strongholds. New rules introduce capture of prisoners, morale, and new Undead strategies. A large expansion, *The Lidless Eye*, appears early next year. <metwice@aol.com>

■ **Mythos** (Chaosium, Albany, CA): The unlimited edition *Standard Game Set*, with two fixed 52-card decks, ships on Halloween. The Steadfast deck's theme relates to H. P. Lovecraft's life in New York with his wife, Sonia Greene, and their friends; the opposing Corrupt

deck is based on HPL's story "The Whisperer in Darkness." The 200-card *Dreamlands* limited stand-alone expansion should be out by year's end. <chaosium@aol.com>

■ **On the Edge** (Atlas Games, Roseville, MN): In place of the long-dormant plans for a *Wetworks* expansion, John Nephew and Robin D. Laws are designing *The Chaos Plague*, a stand-alone, fixed-deck game (compatible with OTE) for release in the first half of 1997

DOOM (Chaosium)

At GenCon this August, Charlie Krank of Chaosium announced that the company has acquired rights to publish a trading card game based on the computer game **Doom** (id Software). The most popular

PREVIEW

computer game in history, **Doom** is a vertiginous, high-speed violence-fest where players run through corridors and shoot everything that moves. Krank says the card game will offer "better motivation and more rationale" for play than simply piling up bodies, and that the card version will explore "more than you find out in the computer game." Design work has not yet begun. Krank says the card game may appear as early as next summer, to tie into a possible **Doom** movie. Details in later issues. <chaosium@aol.com>



In the game, the Control-dominated island of Al Amarja collides catastrophically with an alternate reality where Chaos reigns. A new edition of the *Over the Edge* RPG should be out now, and a game-related novel by Laws, *Pierced Heart*, is due in October. <atlasgames@aol.com>

■ **OverPower** (Fleer/SkyBox, Mt. Laurel, NJ): *DC OverPower*, a long-

planned stand-alone compatible game using the Superman and Batman character families from DC Comics, appeared in September (62-card starters, \$8.95; 9-card boosters, \$1.75). *DC OverPower* works with the Marvel version but adds a new ability, Intellect. (1-800-OP-RULES)

■ **Quest for the Grail** (Stone Ring Games, Austin, TX): *Knights of the Isles*, scheduled for October, introduces Scottish and Irish knights plus a new card type, seasonal events. About a third of the 135-card set (three rarities) uses new art by Randy Asplund-Faith, April Lee, and others. Fourteen-card boosters (\$2.75) include two rares. Stone Ring planned a September release for a gift box with two random starter decks plus four new promotional cards out of a set of fifteen. The promo cards will also be distributed in magazines and at conventions. <srgames@aol.com>

■ **Star Trek®: The Card Game** (Fleer/SkyBox): (See review p. 85.)

■ **Star Wars CCG** (Decipher): *Hotb*, first of three 162-card expansions based on the second movie, is now scheduled for November. *Dagobah* is planned for February; *Bespin*, for next October. This January, Parker Brothers will distribute another

introductory two-player game, this time based on *The Empire Strikes Back*. The future of the *Shadows of the Empire* expansion is uncertain; some cards planned for *Shadows* will instead appear in a *Special Edition* expansion projected for June, 1997. This set draws on the new footage Lucasfilm has produced for the twentieth anniversary re-release in May of the first *Star Wars* film.

For those who like to plan ahead, Decipher has announced three *Return of the Jedi* expansions (*Tatooine*, *Endor*, and *Death Star*) for release in February, June, and October, 1998. <CCG CustomerService@decipher.com>; Web: <www.decipher.com>

■ **The X-Files** (NXT Games/U.S. Playing Cards, Cincinnati, OH): (See review p. 81.) ■

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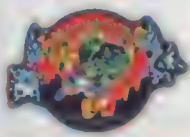
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Investigating the X-Files

X-Files Collectible Card Game ▼ a review by Lester Smith

Time for a show of hands: Is there anyone here who hasn't heard of the *X-Files* television series? I thought not.

Second question: Is there anyone here who hasn't seen at least a half dozen episodes? Same answer, I see. Last question: How many people here are fanatics about the show? Careful, people, or you'll dislocate your shoulders.

Considering the great popularity of the television series, it should come as no surprise that someone has picked up the rights to publish a trading card game based on the show. That someone is U.S. Playing Cards, with NXT Games as their design house. The game marks USPC's first venture into the TCG market.

For those readers who may *not* be familiar with the series, the *X-Files* involves two FBI special agents, Fox Mulder and Dana Scully, who find themselves investigating cases outside the norm, the titular "X-Files." The pair faces alien abductions, paranormal mental activities, subterranean life forms, government conspiracies, and just about any other bizarre threat that you might imagine.

The point of the game is to investigate an X-File. (Surprise, surprise.) At the beginning of the game, each player chooses an X-File card (not merely an X-Files card) and plays it face down on the table. The first player to correctly identify an opponent's X-File wins the game.

In order to do this, each player fields a team of Agent cards and sends them to Site cards, where they try to gather clues, perhaps with the aid of Equipment, Witness, and Event cards. Once there, they may be opposed by another player's Adversary, Bluff, and Event cards, and battle may result, using Combat cards. Whenever a team successfully researches at a Site, the owning player can ask one yes/no question of another player concerning the nature of that opponent's X-File.

The X-Files themselves each represent a different episode from the TV series, and they are identified by four categories: Affiliation, Motive, Method, and Result. For example, the card for the "Red Museum" episode (an Alien DNA Steroid Program X-File—Project Purity Control) bears the "Government" Affiliation, the "Knowledge" Motive, the "Subterfuge" Method, and the "Physiological Imbalance" Result. Once a player has discovered the specifics of the four categories, a checklist of episodes, included in the game, clearly identifies the specific X-File. Yes, this is a lot like a souped-up version of Parker Brothers' Clue board game.



X-Files Collectible Card Game

(U.S. Playing Cards,
Cincinnati, OH)

FORMAT

347-card set; 60-card starters,
\$9.50; 15-card boosters, \$3.00.
For two or more players;
playing time 40 minutes.

GAME DESIGN

NXT Games (Duncan MacDonell
and Ron Kent)

CONTACT

USPC, 4590 Beech St.,
Cincinnati, OH 45212-3497





Fans of the TV show will be happy to recognize in the cards characters and happenings directly from the series. Among the Agent cards, for instance, Mulder and Scully are joined by Alex Krycek, Special Agent Henderson, Inspector Phoebe Green, and others. They can run afoul of Section Chief Joseph McGrath or Detective Kelly Ryan, and may be the targets of an Alien Harvester or the Dark Angel, among other things.

The cards themselves are visually impressive. Bear in mind that I reviewed the game using mock-ups without art, and have had only a moment at the GenCon game fair to view the actual cards. But what I saw was quite nice. Each depicted a tabletop with the contents of a file spilled across it. Among the papers on that tabletop was a photo of the character represented by the card. The visible portions of various papers bore the separate pieces of text important to that card. The card backs are simple black, with the "X" logo dominating the space.

The shape of the game design is also attractive. From the start, you can't help but want to like this game. Characters move from the Bureau to the Field and may end up in the Hospital. (Each is a separate area of the table.) When in the right area, they can be equipped with gear. The Sites they investigate and the things they encounter there, whether helpful or threatening, are exciting to read. Details from the series permeate everything so much that a prospective player can't help but feel intrigued.

As for the rulebooks (one Basic, one Advanced) they are a study in elegance of presentation. The tone of the text is smooth and friendly, the rules themselves are as organized as an old-time barn-raising, and there are plenty of well-written examples to make things clear. There is one exception to this: the rulebook names the acting player the "Investigating" player, but the cards consider the person "Active"; the responding player is called the "Directed" player in the rules, while the cards refer to him or her as the "Conspiracy." Why not just pick two of those four terms and stick with them? Still, this is hardly a fatal flaw.

Some of the cards are just too difficult to bring into play. While the game allows a

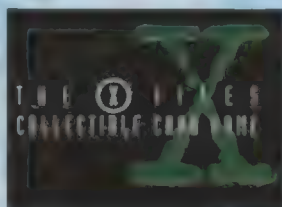
person to discard and replenish several cards each turn, whether "Investigating" or "Directed," all too often a player is left holding cards whose "Activators" don't match the "Key Words" on cards already in play. This problem is exacerbated in the Advanced game, when players have to generate and keep track of separate Resource Points and Conspiracy Points, then spend them to pay for drawing and playing the cards.

The frustration is worst when playing the part of the "Directed" player, especially in the Advanced game. You have to hope that your deck holds cards that can be played against the other player's deck, that you have guessed right as to which of them to keep in your hand, and, in the Advanced game, that the "Investigating" player then chooses you as the opponent for the Site that you can match. If not, you just sit and watch that person play.

Making a deck work as the "Investigating" player is easier. People can tune their decks to have the right Activators and Key Words, making play of Sites, Investigators, Witnesses, and such fairly easy.

People who enjoy pure strategy games might find something to like in the resource management of X-Files play. But the presentation of the game leads a person to believe that play is all about weird adventure, not abstract strategy and bookwork. Fans of the series want to see Mulder and Scully travel to odd sites and struggle against mysterious threats. They don't want to feel like they are real FBI agents wading through bureaucratic paperwork or that they are real conspiracy leaders wrestling with the ineptitude of their followers. In the series, the threats tend to be large and mysterious, and Mulder and Scully barely manage to survive many of them, let alone thwart them. In the game, the opposite is true. Perhaps if NXT had designed play with a thrust toward bringing your conspiracy to fruition, and your agents had to react to other players' decks rather than the other way around, the game's playability might improve. ■

Lester Smith is a freelance game designer and reviewer based in Elkhorn, WI. He is probably best known for designing the award-winning Dragon Dice game.



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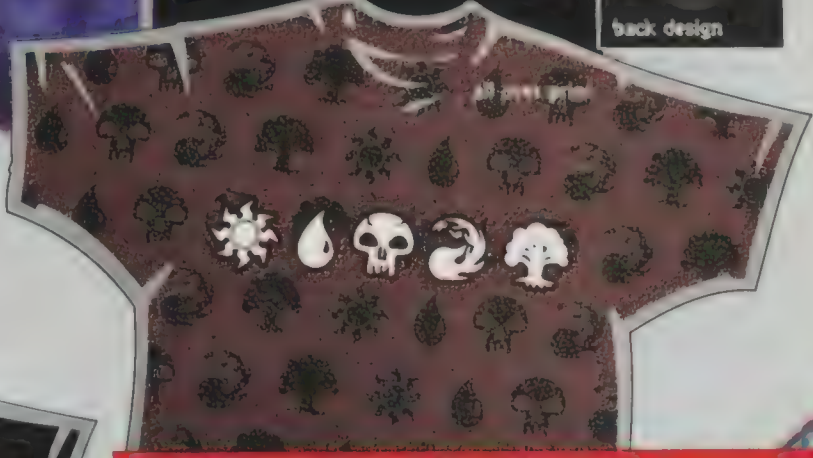
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Seeking New Life

Star Trek: The Card Game ▼ a review by Allen Varney

Today's "next generation" of gamers may think of *Star Trek* entirely in terms of its big-budget movies and three franchise shows (*Next Generation*, *Deep Space Nine*, and *Voyager*). The classic 1966-69 television series that spawned all these properties lacked their glitzy effects, but the original *Star Trek* had heart, and it held genuine interest. So does the new Fleer/SkyBox *Star Trek: The Card Game*, a clever game that offers fun and flavor without busting your budget.

Young gamers undoubtedly recognize the *Trek* regulars in their current geriatric movie incarnation ("Scotty, I need a pacemaker in five minutes or we're dead!"), but Captain Kirk, Spock, McCoy, and the rest are young again in *Star Trek: TCG*. The game was designed by the Mag Force 7 team (*Wing Commander*, *Star of the Guardians*), has been printed on excellent stock, and is illustrated with stills from the series.

In contrast to the polish of Decipher's *Star Trek: The Next Generation CCG*, SkyBox has gone for a retro, 1960s look with cartoony phaser graphics and grainy, unaltered stills. The style doesn't fit a series set in the 23rd century, the icons take too much space, and collectors will dislike the poor video grabs, but with *Star Trek*, Mag Force and Fleer/SkyBox have produced their best-looking game yet. The rulebook, though wordy, merits stronger praise. It explains the novel design clearly, although *Trek*, even more so than most games, works better when someone teaches you the rules. (Thanks to Kevin Mergen for teaching me at GenCon!)

What a delight to see that SkyBox has not "deciphered" its customers (to use current Net jargon) by making the main characters rare. Instead, each starter deck includes Kirk, Spock, McCoy, and the *Enterprise*, all players share control of these four "Core Crew" members. Randomly distributed secondary characters (Scotty, Uhura, obscure lieutenants and yeomen, etc.) belong to the "Crew Complements" of individual players. So in one game I might control Sulu and Yeoman Rand in my Complement, you

might have Chekov in yours, and each of us could control the Core Crew during our turns.

The equal-opportunity Core Crew is *Trek*'s neatest feature. To win the game, you need twenty-five experience counters (XC) on all Crew you control. For reasons given below, you want to put plenty of XC on the Core Crew. These XC count toward your total, but only when you're the Current Player. On the next turn, when you're the Challenging Player, all those tokens you placed now help your opponent, the new Current Player. The strategic dilemma recalls the best *Trek* episodes.

How do you earn XC? Each turn, you discard as many cards as you like, fill your hand to seven, and play one Crew card. You then play a sequence of Mission, Plot, and Discovery cards keyed to episodes from the series' first season ("Charlie X," "Squire of Gothos," "Enemy Within," and so on). These episode cards award XC if you complete a sequence successfully. Usually you play these cards from your hand, but if you don't have them, you can play default episode cards in their place. Your opponent can replace your default cards with his or her own, which may reduce your XC award or threaten your Crew.

For each mission, you appoint a landing party from the Core Crew and your Complement; only these Crew can collect XC for



Star Trek: The Card Game

Fleer/SkyBox,
1120 Route 73
Mount Laurel, NJ 08054

FORMAT

308-card series (three rarities)
plus 6 promotional cards.
65-card starters/\$8.95;
15-card boosters/\$2.75.
For two players; playing time
30-90 minutes.

GAME DESIGN

Jeff Grubb, Don Perrin,
and Margaret Weiss

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Brad Copeland, Daniel Hastings,
Chris Kissam, David Roberts,
and Luke Fryer

CONTACT

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Star Trek
Crew Ability
SECURITY lets a red shirt die in place of someone important.

Funniest Card
SHIRTLESS KIRK turns a Tempt Challenge into a Crew member. (See also **BOOT SCENE**.)
Runner-Up: **LONG-WINDED SPEECH**.

Strangest Challenge
WHITE RABBIT, from "Shore Leave"—ooh, are you scared?

Silliest Card
MILITARY OFFICERS, 20th CENTURY—A 2/2/2 Challenge ("The few, the proud, the hopelessly out-classed").

Most Promising Comment
Heard During Play
"This makes me want to go back and watch those old episodes."



the mission. As you play Mission and Plot cards, your opponent may play Challenge cards, which can include Klingons, Romulans, monsters, villains, godlike balls of light, and all the many perils from the episodes. Challenges take thirteen forms (like Attack, Tempt, Enigma, Befuddle, Fatal Allure) that work against your Crew's Combat, Logic, and Humanity ratings. The Challenge type dictates choice of target, rating used, and result.

Each Challenge requires an Icon Draw. From your deck, you draw cards equal to the rating of the target Crew; your opponent draws cards from his or her deck based on the Challenge's rating. Each Trek card has one icon at the bottom, either Combat, Humanity, or Logic. Whoever draws more of the appropriate icon types in the Icon Draw wins the challenge; ties favor the defender. For example, if I play Talosians, an Outwit Challenge, you would choose the target—say, Spock. The Challenge uses Logic. Spock has an excellent Logic rating of 7, the Talosians 5. You draw seven cards, I draw five, and whoever gets more Logic icons wins the Challenge. Then all twelve cards get discarded—cards in Trek games flow fast.

Challenge results can throw Crew off a landing party, turn them to your opponent's side, or, worst of all, cause an Icon Flip for the targeted crew member. If this happens, you flip over the top card of your deck, and if it's a Combat card, the crew member is dead. Always put a Medical officer in your landing party to reduce a "Killed" result to a mere "Neutralized." (To show how this game plays on its fans' memories, one of my Challenges once killed Spock, and that unsettled me for the rest of the game.) If the *Enterprise* gets Killed on your turn and you don't have an Engineer to cancel the result, you lose the game.

Once you play a Mission, at least one Plot, and a Discovery, your episode is complete. Probably it's an unimaginable amalgam of androids, hortas, and White Rabbits, but you'll collect XC tokens anyway, assuming your landing party has healthy Crew left. (Your opponent also collects XC for successful Challenges and episode cards placed on your defaults.) You place these XC on the Crew that took part in the episode, up to a maximum of five XC apiece. In later turns, you can spend a Crew's XC to use his or her special ability...which brings us back to the Core Crew and why you put XC on them when they'll promptly help your opponent. Kirk, Spock, and McCoy have the highest rat-

ings and neatest special abilities in the game. Kirk can intercede, drawing to himself (no doubt with much overacting) a Challenge that targets another Crew. McCoy can heal other Crew, and Spock's Vulcan Nerve Pinch can increase your Combat score in an Icon Draw. However, using these abilities costs XC, and tokens are paid to your opponent! So by using abilities to fend off a Challenge, you're strengthening your enemy's ability to bring in more Challenges. The flow of XC, with its many delicate decisions about resource management and tactics, is the most ingenious feature of *Star Trek: The Card Game*.

Card balance is the major problem in *Star Trek*. Many Crew are deadwood, red shirts whose entire purpose in the series consisted of getting killed by this week's menace. Many Challenges are obviously inferior to others of the same type, and some narrowly applicable Effects and Wilds are unlikely to find a place in most decks. One solution: Reduce the four-of-a-card limit to one—that is, make all cards unique.

Not enough episodes use the *Enterprise*, and some of the attributes (bold words in the text—ROMULAN, SCIENTIST, TELEPATHIC) are sloppily placed. For instance, the Organian Council of Elders, we're told, "hide their true appearance from both humans and KLINGONS." So, if we take the rules literally, the Council card could get a Combat bonus from Disruptor Blast, which affects cards with the KLINGON attribute. Hope your games rely on common sense.

One request for the next edition: How about redesigning the Challenges to put all the information you need right on the card? At GenCon I talked with playtesters who had been playing *Trek* exhaustively for weeks, and they still couldn't keep all the types straight.

Star Trek: The Card Game is a pleasure to play, especially fresh out of the box. It should appeal to experienced gamers who remember the classic *Star Trek* fondly and to those seeking an abstract, fast-moving game of resource management.

I got into science-fiction fandom as a Trekkie back in my teens. At that time, long before the first movie, revival of *Star Trek* seemed a fond dream. Now Paramount refers to it as "the franchise," trainloads of products exploit its fans (the Jean-Luc Picard ST:TNG card now goes for \$50), and I feel grave misgivings about that old naive hope. But it's good to see SkyBox's new game, a quality product that treats the classic show—and its devotees—with respect. ■

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Killer Instinct

"Zowie! Just Look at Those Moves" ▼ a review by Allen Varney

Blood sport fans, I like Killer Instinct much more than I'd imagined possible. Not a fan of the 1994 video game that has splattered bloody phosphors over arcades and Super Nintendo systems worldwide, I knew nothing of Chief Thunder, Fulgore, Rip-tor, B. Orchid, Sabrewulf, or the other combatants in the wildly popular death-matches of the twenty-first century. Now I'm chanting "Ultra Combo!" without ever having dropped a quarter in a machine. Trading-card giant Topps, with its excellent debut card game, has made me a Killer Instinct fan.

"If you can't take the heat, get outta my arena!"

In KI's successful combo of game design, art, and production, one vital Special Move was the selection of experienced designers. Shane Hensley (*The Last Crusade* World War II card game and the new *Deadlands* RPG) and Greg Gorden (*Earthdawn*, *Torg*, *DC Heroes*) teamed with Topps's Mike Mikaelian to create not just a sharp simulation of video combat but also the world beyond the sport.

Players control Shadow Corps opposed to the rule of evil, omnipotent Ultratech Corporation. To finance a new world order, the Corps

sponsor fighters in the multi-billion-dollar Killer Instinct game. Many of the card game's Effects involve their insidious hidden machinations, which give the card game dimension and depth.

"Ow! Now that's a dirty blow. I like it!"

In a jarring transition from the Promotion Phase, where

you play a Shadow Corp that refers to its fighters as "meat," you then become that meat. Most of

Killer Instinct happens in the Combat Phase, where you and one opponent pick up your "combat stacks" of Basic and Special Moves and play them by pairs in seven-card sequences. Moves are described by speed (quick, medium, fierce) and location (high, low, jumping).

The fascinating and very original system matches the "bloodlines" on each move card's upper edge. If the opponent's damage number falls within the red spatter of your bloodline, you hit. Jumping Moves hit low Moves, which hit high Moves, which hit jumps. Fast Moves have longer bloodlines and are thus more likely to hit, but they do less damage. Declared attacks can vary their damage and bloodline lengths, and certain attacks grant free Moves. Successful hits score 1 to 6 points of damage; the first fighter to take 28 points loses the fight.



Killer Instinct

Topps Card Games
1 Whitehall Street
New York, NY 10004

FORMAT

363-card set (three rarities):
60-card starter deck, \$9.95;
12-card booster, \$2.75.

DESIGN

Shane Hensley, Greg Gorden,
and Michael Mikaelian

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Don Alan Zakrzewski

ILLUSTRATIONS

Norman Paul Dwyer, John
Hughes, Kurt Kanellos, John
Picha, Charles Swedberg, Zero3,
and Rareware

CONTACT

Topps Card Games
Michael Mikaelian
(212) 376-0544

Basic moves in boosters, as Magic players used to tire of finding still more lands. A fixed set of Basics in each starter makes more sense.

The computer-generated art is debatable. I like it for what it is, especially the way it maintains a consistent look between video-game frame grabs and original art. But the cheesy T&A exploitation art on the booster boxes—please!

KI's big weak spot: frustratingly slow card flow. You get two cards between fights. Because a game ends when one fighter wins three fights, you may see only ten or twelve cards during a game. No minimum deck size is given, but the cards do so many neat things (combat Effects, arenas, victory point bonuses) that you'll want plenty—but you'll never see most of them.

"Let's turn up the heat, baby!"

In a better world it would go without saying that fans of the Killer Instinct video game will enjoy this game. But last year's fire-and-forget *Mortal Kombat* card game proved it ain't so, so... Video game fans will love Topps's *Killer Instinct*, as will fans of tactical fighting games such as *Ultimate Combat!* I also recommend KI more generally for its clever design. You'll need a couple of starters and a few boosters to build a practical deck and maybe some house rules to get through that deck faster. But soon you'll be playing combos and Terminal Moves like a thirteen-year-old, even if you lack fast reflexes. And you won't need a single quarter. ■

A fighter within 4 points of losing is vulnerable to "Danger Moves" that kill or humiliate.

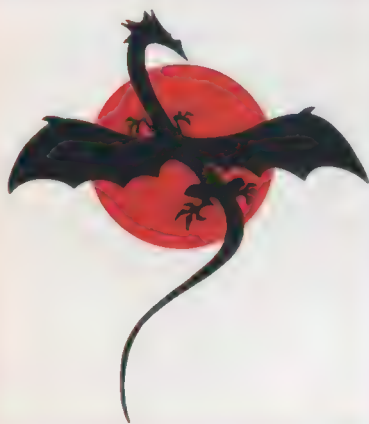
Like its video inspiration, KI lets you deal Combo damage. Here it's not a matter of fast-timed button pushing and joystick manipulation but of matching icon symbols on consecutive hits. A successful combo scores a bonus hit equal to the lesser value of the two Moves. This and similar rules offer flavor and tactical richness, all at a quick pace.

"Ouch! That's gonna hurt in the morning!"

The KI rulebook leaves important points unclear, and booster sorting is suboptimal. You'll get tired of finding

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From the Guys ^(and Gal) Downstairs

The Best Computer Games at GenCon ▼ by Teerwynn Woodruff

In this ongoing column, "the guys downstairs" (on WotC's Research & Development team) take a break from playing with cards to check out the latest computer games.

GenCon has long been an annual pilgrimage for thousands of roleplayers, boardgamers, and wargamers. In recent years, thanks to Magic and other TCGs, card gamers have also joined this yearly throng. However, this year was perhaps the first time that computer games had a truly significant presence at GenCon.

Booths were staffed by a number of online companies, including America Online (AOL) and the Total Entertainment Network (TEN). AOL was showcasing a number of its new and upcoming online games, including the very promising *Archmage*, *BattleTech*, and *Legends of Kesmai*.

In *Archmage*, players form into teams of eight wizards. Teams attempt to touch spheres scattered about the play environment, changing each sphere touched to the team's color. Each team must then keep other teams from touching its spheres and changing them to the other team's color. Of course, being archmages, the players have spells on hand to protect spheres, destroy enemies, and so forth. *Archmage* should be available this winter, and AOL is planning tournaments and leagues.

BattleTech, FASA's popular game of mayhem with giant robotic tanks, also looks promising. In the online version of *BattleTech* (not to be confused with Activision's CD-ROM *MechWarrior* games), players may choose to play any of a number of "BattleMechs." The 'Mechs then duke it out with each other, attempting to destroy other 'Mechs to collect points. The online game is nicely balanced so smaller, weaker 'Mechs get

more points for each kill than more massive, powerful 'Mechs.

Legends of Kesmai, a nifty swords-and-sorcery game designed and developed by the Kesmai Corporation, has an intuitive interface that allows players to quickly immerse themselves in the world. *Legends of Kesmai* can support hundreds of players over the Internet at a time, and players can communicate with each other easily using a number of "emoti-keys," which allow players to



do things like laugh, groan, and yell at one another.

Westwood Studio, known for its consistent game quality, tantalized congoers with demos of follow-ups to two of its most popular games. *Command & Conquer: Red Alert*, the sequel to Westwood's award-winning, real-time strategic war game, expands the options available in the original game. Due this November, *Red Alert* pits players against the military might of Joseph Stalin. New features include six-player networking, a skirmish (read: practice) mode, and an enhanced AI. Players will also be able to play up to three foes online on both the TEN <www.ten.net> and MPLAYER <www.mplayer.com> Internet services.

In addition to *Red Alert*, Westwood also showcased *Lands of Lore II: Guardians of Destiny*. Featuring a lush

graphic environment and an AI that promises to make computer foes more intelligent than players might expect, *Guardians of Destiny* looks like it might put Westwood at the top of the adventure/RPG heap, just as *Command & Conquer* put Westwood in the strategy game limelight. *Lands of Lore II* should hit store shelves in November.

Both MicroProse's and Acclaim's upcoming *Magic: The Gathering* computer games received a lot of favorable attention from GenCon attendees. Both versions allow players to take *Magic* into new realms (their computers and playstations, respectively), and soon players will also be able to challenge each other over the Internet!

In an interesting cross-media move, computer game design house Holistic Design, Inc., introduced a new roleplaying game, *Fading Suns*, while previewing their upcoming computer game *Emperor of the Fading Suns*. A dark science-fiction game designed by Bill Bridges (*Werewolf: The Apocalypse*) and Andrew Greenberg (*Vampire: The Masquerade*), *Fading Suns* was perhaps the most intriguing new RPG at GenCon. The promising *Emperor of the Fading Suns*, a strategic computer game set in the universe of *Fading Suns*, is due for release this holiday season.

Other new games, including Mindscape's *Necrodome* and Acclaim's *Iron & Blood* (set in TSR's dark realm of *Ravenloft*) promise to make this winter an enjoyable one for computer gamers. So, exhausted and laden with goodies, we made our way back to Seattle to playtest our new finds. .for research purposes only, of course. ■

As *Wizards of the Coast's* sole female game designer, Teerwynn threatened to Nerf the *Duelist* editors over the title "From the Guys Downstairs." She's currently working on a *Magic* expansion planned for next year.

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by Mark Rosewater

DOROTHY

MAGIC THE PUZZLING



Poison My Pretty

Your opponent is Dorothy. Between her Wooden Sphere and the Stream of Life she cast last turn, Dorothy has plenty of life. Luckily, you've managed to give her seven poison counters—three more and the game is yours. Unfortunately, Dorothy has been slowly bleeding you a point at a time with a Wanderlust on your Wall of Swords, and you are a turn away from defeat. It is the beginning of your main phase. Your goal is to inflict the last three counters of poison and finish Dorothy off.



Pearled Unicorn 2/4 including Holy Armor



War Mammoth 3/3

YOU



Nova Pentacle



Strip Mine



Swamp

CARD HIGHLIGHTS



El Hajjaj

Gain 1 life for every 1 damage El-Hajjaj deals. You cannot gain more life in this way than the toughness of the creature or the total life of the player El-Hajjaj damages.

1 ♣♣



Nova Pentacle

3 ♣: Redirect damage done to you from one source to target creature on opponent's choice.

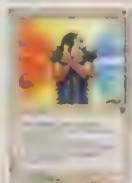
4



Wanderlust

Wanderlust deals 1 damage to target creature's controller during that player's upkeep.

2 ♣



Indestructible Aura

Any damage dealt to target creature for the rest of the turn is reduced to 0.

*

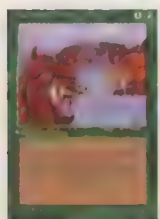
STUMPED? FEAR NOT.

Hints for the two solution-less puzzles can be found on The Duelist web page at <<http://www.wizards.com>>. I am still happy to take feedback at <woody@wizards.com>, but I no longer have time to correct solutions, as the volume has finally overwhelmed me.

(WHITE/GREEN)

36 LIFE REMAINING 7 POISON COUNTERS

NO CARDS IN HAND



Darkwood Boars 4/4



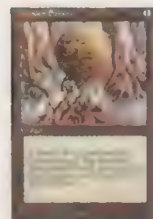
Grizzly Bears 3/4
including Holy Strength



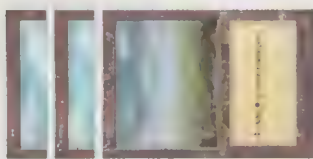
Mesa Pegasus 1/1



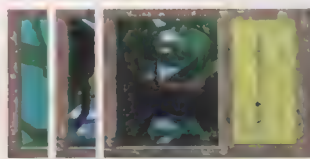
Serra Angel 4/4



Wooden Sphere



Plains (3)



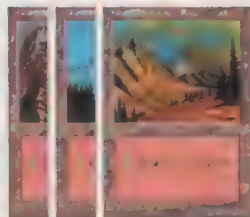
Forests (3)

(BLUE/WHITE/RED)

1 LIFE REMAINING



Forest



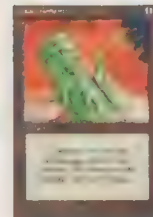
Mountains (3)



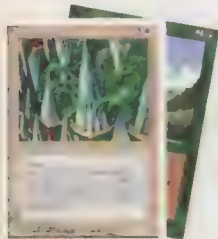
Fellwar Stones (2)



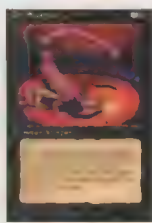
Mana Flares (2)



Jade Monolith



Wall of Swords 3/5
including Wanderlust



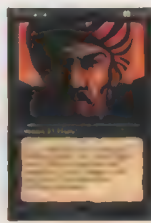
Pit Scorpion 1/1



Marsh Viper 1/2



Brothers of Fire 2/2



El-Hajjaj 1/1



Orcish Artillery 1/3

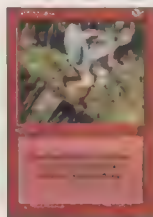
YOUR HAND



Indestructible Aura



Giant Growth



Earthquake



Immolation

Common Ground

Below are eight groupings of three cards. Each grouping has a theme that ties the cards together. All you need to do is figure out the theme for each grouping and then find the fourth card below that also belongs. No theme involves the color, expansion, casting cost, or card type (instant, interrupt, etc.) of the cards.

GROUP
A



GROUP
E



GROUP
B



GROUP
F



GROUP
C



GROUP
G



GROUP
D

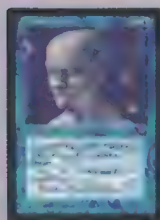


GROUP
H



WHICH GROUP DO THESE CARDS BELONG TO?

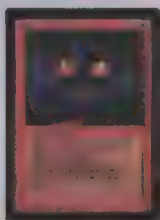
#1



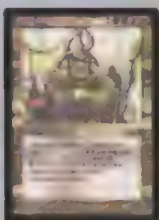
#2



#3



#4



#5



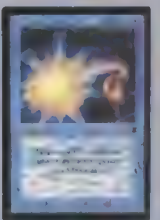
#6



#7



#8



(1) 1. Cards which round up or down
(2) 2. Magicians of card names

(3) 3. Cards whose powers exist on blue cantrips
(4) 4. Appears in *Mirage*

(5) 5. Cards whose art appears on tea-shirts
(6) 6. Lets you shuffle your deck

(7) 7. Cards which reference other specific cards
(8) 8. Two artists

BILL (WHITE/RED)

9 LIFE REMAINING

NO CARDS IN HAND OR GRAVEYARD

Lots of Fish

Your opponent is Bill. He got an early lead in the duel, but you managed to stall before he could finish you off. Then he cast a Dwarven Warriors and the trouble started back up. It is the start of your main phase. Defeat Bill this turn without dying yourself.



Dwarven Warrior 1/1



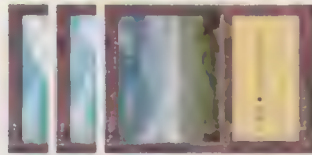
Goblin Elite Infantry 2/2



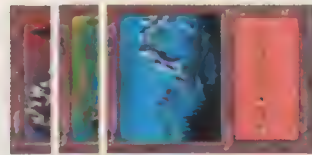
Kjeldoran Skyknight 1/1



Shivan Dragon 1/3 including two Weakness



Plains (3)



Mountain (3)



Wall of Stone 0/8

YOU (BLACK/GREEN)

2 LIFE REMAINING



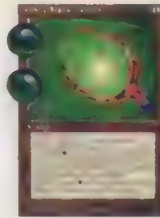
Fellwar Stone



Swamp



Forests (5)



Green Mana Battery (2 counters)



Sylvan Library



Concordant Crossroads



Pradesh Gypsies 1/3 including Web



Giant Mantis 3/5 with Krovikan Fetish



Fyndhorn Elder 1/1



Soldevi Adnate 1/2



Crown of the Ages

YOUR HAND

TOP CARD IN LIBRARY



Animate Dead



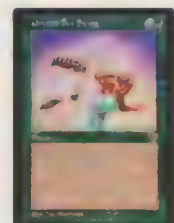
Grave Servitude



Transmutation



Armor of Thorns



Unyáros Bee Sting

*Step-by-step
solutions to last
issue's "Magic:
The Puzzling"*

by Mark Rosewater

THIS MORNING I WAS supposed to be executed for my fiancée's murder. Since I'm convinced she's not dead and am quite eager to find out who framed me (not to mention that I'm squeamish about being shot at by a firing squad), I decided it would be best to engineer a prison break. It cost me several thousand dollars and the promise of a few vital organs to make my breakout. Everything was going smoothly until I learned that my emancipators intended to take the aforementioned organs right on the spot. Being somewhat attached to my lungs, liver, and spleen, I was forced to make a daring escape by diving off a two-hundred-foot bridge into a raging river. Nonetheless, I don't want my chaotic life as a framed fugitive/renegade organ donor to interfere with this column. It's nice to at least have one place in my life where I can find the answers.

MAGIC

THE PUZZLING



Stayin' Alive

Published in *Duelist* #13, p. 90

The first concern you should have is surviving your upkeep with Copper Tablet in play. And keep in mind that Eadie has both a Flash Counter and a Counterspell in her hand, which can cause numerous complications.

OPTION A

Upkeep:

- 1) Tap the plains to add one white mana to your mana pool.
- 2) Use the white mana to play Swords to Plowshares on your Orcish Artillery. You gain 1 life and are now at 2 life.

It is quite possible that Eadie will counter your Swords to Plowshares. If so, you need to skip down to "Option B." Otherwise, you have survived your upkeep and must now figure out how to take out Ali from Cairo so that you can do the final point of damage to Eadie.

- 3) Take the 1 damage from the Copper Tablet. You are now at 1 life.

Draw Phase:

- 4) Draw the Prodigal Sorcerer.

Main Phase:

- 5) Tap a mountain and a Tundra to add one red and one generic mana to your mana pool.

Eadie's biggest threat is her ability to counterspell. In order to defeat her, you are going to need a way to stop that ability.

- 6) Use the red and generic mana to cast Stone Rain on Eadie's Volcanic Island. (Remember, Stone Rain

costs 1 less to cast due to Stone Calendar.)

Eadie might counter this spell, but whether she does or not, she can only counter one more spell.

- 7) Tap Tundra to put one white mana in your mana pool.
- 8) Use the white mana to cast Disenchant on the Spectral Cloak. (Once again, it's cheaper because of Stone Calendar.)

We must assume that Eadie will counter this since she would lose the game if she did not. Now Eadie can no longer counterspell.

- 9) Tap Plateau to add one red mana to your mana pool.
- 10) Use the red mana to cast Red Elemental Blast on the Spectral Cloak, destroying it.

With one counterspell Eadie will be unable to stop the second spell that destroys the Spectral Cloak.

- 11) Tap Prodigal Sorcerer to kill Ali from Cairo.
 - 12) Declare end of turn.
- Eadie's Upkeep:
- 13) Eadie dies by taking damage from her own Copper Tablet.

The final thing to remember is that once you rid Eadie of Ali's protection, her own Copper Tablet will do her in.

OPTION B

This option assumes that Eadie counters your Swords to Plowshares.

- 1) Tap a mountain to add one red mana to your mana pool.

- 2) Use the red mana to cast Red Elemental Blast and stop Eadie's Counterspell (or Flash Counter). Eadie then either lets the Swords to Plowshares take effect or counters your Red Elemental Blast and thus becomes tapped out.

If Eadie chooses the first option, continue with Option A. After you cast Stone Rain, Eadie will be unable to do anything. If instead she counters your Red Elemental Blast, proceed to step 3:

- 3) Tap both Tundras and a Plateau to add two white and one red mana to your mana pool.
- 4) Use one white mana to cast Disenchant on the Spectral Cloak. (This is cheaper due to Stone Calendar.)
- 5) Use one red mana to cast Shatter on Copper Tablet.
- 6) Tap Prodigal Sorcerer to kill Ali from Cairo.
- 7) Tap Orcish Artillery to deal 2 damage to Eadie. Use the remaining white mana (being used as generic) to activate the Circle of Protection: Red and prevent the damage to yourself.

In this alternate solution you survive the Copper Tablet by destroying it and use Orcish Artillery to finish Eadie off.

On the Move

Published in *Duelist* #13, p. 93

To solve this puzzle you need to first figure out how you expect to defeat Bryce. It's obvious once you look at all the cards in play and in your hand that the only way you can deal damage to Bryce is with creatures. But how can you get a creature through his tough line of defense? You begin by stealing your own creature back.

At the end of Bryce's turn:

- 1) Tap two plains, three forests, and two mountains to add two white, three green (one used as generic), and two red mana (both used as generic) to your mana pool.
- 2) Use two white mana to cast Ward of Lights on the Volcanic Dragon. Name protection from blue. This will knock the Mind Harness and Cloak of Invisibility off (as they are

both blue cards) and return the Volcanic Dragon to your control. You need to use Ward of Lights instead of Seedling Charm to get rid of the Mind Harness since the Cloak of Invisibility would have phased the Volcanic Dragon at the beginning of your turn.

- 3) Use one green mana to cast Seedling Charm. Return Ward of Lights to your hand.

As you will soon see, you will need to get a second use out of Ward of Lights.

- 4) Use one green and three generic mana and sacrifice Uktabi Faerie to bury Bryce's Lead Golem.
- 5) Let Bryce's turn end.

Your turn:

- 6) Tap two plains, three forests, and two mountains to add two white, three green (two used as generic), and two red mana to your mana pool.
- 7) Use two white mana to once again cast Ward of Lights on the Volcanic Dragon. This time name protection from black.
- 8) Use one red and one generic mana to put Lightning Reflexes on Flame Elemental. It is now a 4/2 creature with first strike.
- 9) Use one red mana and tap and sacrifice Flame Elemental to deal 4 damage to Bryce's Vaporous Djinn, destroying it.

The Uktabi Faerie and Flame Elemental allow you to rid Bryce of all his nonblack flying blockers.

- 10) Use one green and one generic mana to cast Armor of Thorns on the Volcanic Dragon. It is now a 6/6 creature.
- 11) Attack with the Volcanic Dragon to deal 6 damage to Bryce. Thanks to the Ward of Lights, Bryce is unable to block with either his Catacomb Dragon or his Tainted Specter.

Now, that wasn't so hard, was it? Until next issue, I bid you farewell and wish that your loved one never gets kidnapped by a stranger who frames you for her murder, forcing you to plan a jail break with black-market organ salespeople.

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Warning: May cause insomnia, brain cramps, and the strong urge to hurl the book across the room.

by Richard Garfield



Required Reading

Exploring the world of games has greatly enhanced my experience as a player. I think it's essential that those interested in game design educate themselves as to what has been done already and what people who have studied games have discovered. You won't be bound by these findings, but at least then you'll have something tangible to disagree with! My ideal modern "gamist" should be what the classical scientist was—an expert at everything. While this is nowhere close to possible in science, I believe it is still *very* manageable in games.

Have you tried Bridge? Chess? Go? Poker? *Scrabble*? Roleplaying? I love to explore classic games. Exploring a game involves not just trying it and deciding that you don't like it, but truly attempting to understand what appeal the game has for others. A nice side effect of this approach is that you often develop something of a taste for the game yourself.

Many times people have asked me about games they've designed, and I've looked at the designs and seen places where others had accomplished what they had in more elegant ways. As a result, any innovations were often lost in the noise. Games designed without a solid foundation in existing game design tend to require years of honing, which amounts to reinventing the wheel. I've been told by some of these designers that they don't like their thoughts "polluted" by other people's games because then they won't be able to think outside of conventional lines. But I find the cost of ignorance to be much higher than any possible gain. Game designers should train themselves to think out of the mold, but it's naive to think that you profit by not even knowing what the mold is.

GAMES 101

I sometimes wonder, if I were running a course on games, what books would I have the students read? Precious little literature exists on gaming, but there are enough gems out there that reading is still a good way to learn about games.

The History of Card Games, by David Parlett, is an amazing source for learning about card games, starting with the origin of the deck. The way games catch on and spread and

the way they mutate and die teaches us an incredible amount. The history of games is a difficult subject to write about because of the lack of documentation. In many ways, studying games is like studying folklore; you have to compose a big picture from the stories that survived, and you have to guess where those stories started and how they changed over the years. I consider most traditional games a form of folk art.

Gamut of Games, by Sid Sackson, is a good compilation of some of Sackson's favorite games, both original and collected. Sackson has designed more games than most people have played and has collected more games than most people know exist. He is a true scholar of games, and his insight into them is very educational.

Abbott's New Card Games, by Robert Abbott, is a treasure of original card games (and one board game). Abbott gives insight into how he came up with his games and shows some truly new ways for how to use a deck of cards.

New Rules for Classic Games, by Wayne Schmittberger, teaches you new ways to have fun with the games you already know. This book is also wonderful for learning how to use your knowledge of games to create new ones. And it's beautifully written; after reading it, I felt as though I had spent a weekend chatting with a friend.

Winning Ways (parts one and two), by Berlecamp, Guy, and Conway, is a must for anyone interested in the mathematics of games. If you don't have a knack for technical language, you may not fully appreciate this book, but any willing reader can learn an amazing amount. You may even gain insight into what people are talking about when they refer to the beauty of mathematics.

My understanding and appreciation of games has increased immensely because of these books. Some of them may be hard to find, but if you're interested in games, you won't be disappointed. Remember, the way to advance games, as with any discipline, is to learn what has gone before and to build upon that foundation. ♣

Richard Garfield trained for many years to be a professor of mathematics and was put on a new course by the success of *Magic*. He hasn't completely given up his roots in academics, however.



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